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RICE THIRTY-FIVE CENTS



ALIAS MISS SHERLOCK

BY

ARTHUR LEWIS TUBBS



THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
PHILADELPHIA

Successful Rural Plays

A Strong List From Which to Select Your Next Play

FARM FOLKS. A Rural Play in Four Acts, by ARTHUR LEWIS TUBBS. For five male and six female characters. Time of playing, two hours and a half. One simple exterior, two easy interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Flora Goodwin, a farmer's daughter, is engaged to Philip Burleigh, a young New Yorker. Philip's mother wants him to marry a society woman, and by falsehoods makes Flora believe Philip does not love her. Dave Weston, who wants Flora himself, helps the deception by intercepting a letter from Philip to Flora. She agrees to marry Dave, but on the eve of their marriage Dave confesses, Philip learns the truth, and he and Flora are reunited. It is a simple plot, but full of speeches and situations that sway an audience alternately to tears and to laughter.

HOME TIES. A Rural Play in Four Acts, by ARTHUR LEWIS TUBBS. Characters, four male, five female. Plays two hours and a half. Scene, a simple interior—same for all four acts. Costumes, modern. One of the strongest plays Mr. Tubbs has written. Martin Winn's wife left him when his daughter Ruth was a baby. Harold Vincent, the nephew and adopted son of the man who has wronged Martin, makes love to Ruth Winn. She is also loved by Len Everett, a prosperous young farmer. When Martin discovers who Harold is, he orders him to leave Ruth. Harold, who does not love sincerely, yields. Ruth discovers she loves Len, but thinks she has lost him also. Then he comes back, and Ruth finds her happiness.

THE OLD NEW HAMPSHIRE HOME. A New England Drama in Three Acts, by FRANK DUMONT. For seven males and four females. Time, two hours and a half. Costumes, modern. A play with a strong heart interest and pathos, yet rich in humor. Easy to act and very effective. A rural drama of the "Old Homestead" and "Way Down East" type. Two exterior scenes, one interior, all easy to set. Full of strong situations and delightfully humorous passages. The kind of a play everybody understands and likes.

THE OLD DAIRY HOMESTEAD. A Rural Comedy in Three Acts, by FRANK DUMONT. For five males and four females. Time, two hours. Rural costumes. Scenes rural exterior and interior. An adventurer obtains a large sum of money from a farm house through the intimidation of the farmer's niece, whose husband he claims to be. Her escapes from the wiles of the villain and his female accomplice are both starting and novel.

A WHITE MOUNTAIN BOY. A Strong Melodrama in Five Acts, by CHARLES TOWNSEND. For seven males and four females, and three supers. Time, two hours and twenty minutes. One exterior, three interiors. Costumes easy. The hero, a country lad, twice saves the life of a banker's daughter, which results in their betrothal. A scoundrelly clerk has the banker in his power, but the White Mountain boy finds a way to checkmate his schemes, saves the banker, and wins the girl.

THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
PHILADELPHIA

Alias Miss Sherlock

A Drama in Four Acts

By

ARTHUR LEWIS TUBBS

Author of "The Finger of Scorn," "Home Ties,"
"Farm Folks," "Home Acres," etc.



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Alias Miss Sherlock

JAN - 2 1923

W O 1

Alias Miss Sherlock

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(As they are first heard to speak.)

LILY ANN.....*"Help" at the farm*
AARON FLINT.....*The hired man*
MRS. BREWSTER.....*From New York*
HELEN BREWSTER.....*Her daughter*
LEONARD FILLMORE.....*A young country lawyer*
SARAH NEWCOMB.....*Sister of Mrs. Brewster*
DICK BREWSTER.
HENSON.....*A butler*
RALPH DEERING.
HENRY MARKHAM.....*A detective*
OFFICER HIGGINS.
DELPHINE.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—Yard of Miss Newcomb's farm, Brookville, N. Y., on an afternoon late in August.
ACT II.—The home of Mrs. Brewster, New York City, two weeks later.
ACT III.—An apartment up-town, New York. Two more days have elapsed.
ACT IV.—Same as Act II, three weeks later.

TIME OF PLAYING.—Two hours and a half.

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

LILY ANN. Plain, rather severe-looking and "bossy" country woman, of about forty. A likeable character, in spite of her brusqueness. In first act she wears calico or gingham dress, with apron—regular farm "hired girl" get-up, not untidy nor too neat. In fourth act, somewhat exaggerated "going away" costume of a country bride, but by no means grotesque.

AARON FLINT. Middle-aged farmhand, quaint and comical, but not a caricature. In first act, baggy old trousers, dark shirt with suspenders, dusty boots or shoes and large straw hat. Act IV, rather conspicuous new suit, hat, etc., with brightly polished new shoes.

MRS. BREWSTER. Handsome, haughty woman of the "society climber" type, about fifty or fifty-five; stately, with gray hair and attractive face. Elegant summer costume in first act; afterwards, appropriate costumes, rich and attractive, with jewels, all a bit extravagant but still in good taste.

HELEN BREWSTER. A girl of about twenty-five, "citified" and of beauty and charm, reflecting to a degree her mother's pompous manner, but still capable of inspiring admiration, and, eventually, confidence and sympathy. Dainty dress, with hat and parasol, in Act I. Later, elegant house dresses.

LEONARD FILLMORE. About thirty; tall, well-built, good-looking, of a rather free, offhand manner, but genial and ingratiating. Just a slight trace of "ruralism," but still a man of refinement and culture. Plain suits.

SARAH NEWCOMB. A neat, prim, but attractive woman of forty-five or thereabouts; an "old maid," but of the sweet, "mother and home" variety. Not "green," though ingenuous and just a bit "countrified." In last three acts, on occasion assumes more of "greenness" than is really

natural to her. Act I, plain summer dress; Acts II, III and IV, a little more "dressy," but plain and appropriate.

DICK BREWSTER. A handsome, boyish young man of about twenty-two. Shows some evidence of fast living, but should inspire sympathy, pity, and belief in his innocence. Act I, suit in good city style, but with some signs of rough usage. Acts II and III, same or similar, but neater.

HENSON. Conventional type of English butler, straight, stiff, pompous. Black suit, not necessarily livery or "evening clothes," but appropriate to his position in city house of some social distinction.

RALPH DEERING. About fifty-five; wealthy man of the world, of "roué" type; stout, florid, veneer of polish, but showing his true nature on provocation. Very well dressed, with stylish top-coat, stick, etc.

HENRY MARKHAM. Stern, keen-eyed man of thirty-five or so, in plain business suit.

OFFICER HIGGINS. Police uniform, or plain dark suit.

DELPHINE. Young woman of stern, forbidding aspect; pale; light eyes, very black hair, somewhat incongruous with her natural coloring. Speaks with assumed but excellent French "accent." Act III, plain black costume, not that of the conventional stage "maid." Hair plainly combed, with no "cap." Act IV, plain street dress, with wraps, hat and veil.

ARGUMENT

Mrs. Brewster and her daughter Helen are staying on the farm of the former's sister, Sarah Newcomb. Helen is attracted by Leonard Fillmore, a young country lawyer, but her mother tells her she must accept the wealthy Mr. Deering. Dick Brewster, a likeable boy, for whom his mother has no sympathy, is implicated in a murder and comes to the farm to hide. His Aunt Sarah stands by him in his need and they all move to the city in the effort to clear his name. Fillmore takes up the case because of his love for Helen. Ralph Deering calls on Helen and sees Dick there. Deering was in the apartment when the murder was committed and calls up the police to arrest Dick in revenge for Helen's refusal to marry him. Delphine, a pretended French maid, figures in the trial, and Miss Newcomb feels that she knows more than she has told. She, therefore, investigates on her own account and Delphine confesses she committed the murder unintentionally by trying to shoot Deering, the man who wronged her. Dick is cleared; Mrs. Brewster is thwarted; and Leonard and Helen find their happiness.

NOTICE TO PROFESSIONALS

This play is published for the free use of strictly amateur companies only. Professional actors or organizations wishing to produce it, in any form or under any title, are forbidden to do so without the consent of the author, who may be addressed in care of the publishers.

Alias Miss Sherlock

ACT I

SCENE.—*The yard of a comfortable farm residence, in the northeastern part of New York State. The house, R., is an ancient but fine and well-preserved structure of the old homestead type. There is a porch; windows, with vines; plants, etc.; across back of stage a fence, with open gate C.; at L., a small arbor or summer-house, on the edge of an orchard. At back a road leading to R. and L., beyond fence, and, on flat, the glimpse of rolling fields, a church spire and the roofs of a few houses scattered in the distance.*

(It is the afternoon of a day in the latter part of August. At rise, AARON FLINT is heard whistling, off L. U. E. MRS. BREWSTER is discovered in hammock or chair, in arbor, L., asleep, her book fallen to the ground.)

(Enter AARON FLINT, L. U. E., beyond fence, to gate C.; almost at same moment, LILY ANN appears on porch of house. AARON carries several letters, sealed, addressed and stamped, a newspaper or two and a good-sized parcels-post package of books, addressed. LILY ANN comes down to R. C.)

LILY ANN. That the mail, Aaron? Le's see. Quite a lot, ain't they? *(She takes letters from him.)*

AARON FLINT. Should say they was. Most all for Mis' Brewster, though, 'n' a letter for her daughter. Seems t' me 'tain't nothin' but them around

here, one way 'r 'nother. Wonder how much longer they're going t' stay.

LILY ANN. Land, I d' know. Looks like we'd got 'em saddled onto us for life. Be'n here sence June, 'n' here 'tis 'most September.

(She is closely inspecting the letters.)

AARON. 'T 's a wonder t' me Miss Newcomb don't git tired o' board'n' 'em for nothin', 'n' havin' 'em putt'n' on sech airs 'n' all, even if they are her own sister 'n' niece. All-fired cheeky, I call it.

LILY ANN. Well, you know her—easy as all git-out. Guess I'm the one t' do most of the kickin', when y' come right down to it—all the extry work they make, with coffee took up to their rooms at nine in the mornin', "luncheon," as they call it, about half-past one, and dinner—a full meal, mind y'—at seven at night, when it's 'most time for sensible folks to be goin' t' bed. Keeps me up all hours. I must say I'm gett'n' pretty tired of it.

AARON. I guess you be, 'n' no wonder. But, 's you say, Miss Newcomb's that easy she wouldn't say a word, if they stayed till Kingdom Come. If they ever was a saint on earth, she's one.

LILY ANN. Well, even saints git imposed on. But I suppose, bein' saints, it's up t' them not t' find any fault, even when it's rubbed in. For my part, I think even a saint ought t' have a little gumption. That some more books for her?

AARON. Yep. Some more o' them Sherlock Holmes detectative stories she's always readin', I reckon. Must be four or five here, from the heft o' this bundle.

LILY ANN. Well, it beats all, the amount of that trash she does read—them terrible yarns, all about murders and mysteries. Land, I should think she'd be so full of murder clues 'n' everything 't she couldn't sleep nights. They'd give me the creeps if I was t' read 'em the way she does.

AARON. Oh, I d' know. I sort o' like 'em m'self. Miss Newcomb lent me a few and they certainly

are hummers. I sure would like t' be one of them detectatives they tell about, with all the excitement they have, tracin' up murderers and sech.

LILY ANN. Yes, a pretty detective you'd make. You'd better be gett'n' along detectin' a few chores, instead o' standin' here talkin' murder clues. Here, I'll take that bundle in the house with these letters.

(She takes package. They do not notice MRS. BREWSTER, who is still asleep. AARON gets closer to LILY ANN, "making up" to her. She seems unconscious of his intention, about to go to porch. He detains her.)

AARON. Say, Lily Ann, what y' goin' t' do after supper?

LILY ANN. Wash the dishes, I suppose, as usual. "Dinner" I guess you mean, though—'n' a pile of dishes it makes, too. Makes me sick!

AARON. Say, Lily Ann, if—if I'll wipe 'em, then 'll you go 'n' take a walk?

LILY ANN. Walk? Land, I feel more like walkin' t' bed than anywheres else, once I git through. What do I want t' take a walk for?

AARON. Wal, I thought mebbe you 'n' me'd jest go for a little stroll, if you'd like t', seein' it's moonlight 'n' all. 'T any rate, looks like it was goin' t' be a nice evenin'.

LILY ANN. I declare, Aaron Flint, you're old enough t' have more sense. Gitt'n' sentimental at your age. How many times 've I told you —

AARON. M'm—wal, you know the old sayin', "Them that loves last, loves best," so I guess it ain't too late for you 'n' me —

(He attempts to kiss her; she gives him a playful slap, and starts to go up steps. MRS. BREWSTER wakes and sees them. They pause, turning, as she speaks.)

MRS. BREWSTER *(rising, coming towards c.)*. Per-

haps, when you have finished your most unbecoming behavior, you will inform me whether any of those letters are for me.

AARON (*with an awkward bow of apology*). Y-yes, ma'am, several of 'em is ——

LILY ANN (*looking over letters, quite unperturbed*). I guess some of these are for you, if your name's Mis' Brewster. (*Holds out letters.*)

(*Exit AARON, L. U. E.*)

MRS. BREWSTER (*frigidly, as she takes letters*). Thanks.

LILY ANN. They look mostly like bills, ma'am, seems t' me ——

MRS. BREWSTER. You are entirely too familiar for a servant. I shall speak to my sister about it.

LILY ANN. Huh! I ain't afraid of anything you'll say to Miss Newcomb about me. I guess I ain't lived with her the past fourteen years without her knowin' me well enough not t' let anything you could say count, even if you are her own sister—and from "the city." I should think, the way you've been stayin' here all summer, you 'n' your daughter, 'n' been waited on 'n' everything, without payin' a cent for it, that you wouldn't have so very much to say. That's my opinion, 'f I was to express it.

(*LILY ANN is on porch, in a "huff."* MRS. BREWSTER *has crossed back to L., near seat, almost overcome by her indignation.*)

MRS. BREWSTER. Oh! this is more than I can be expected to stand ——

LILY ANN. Well, then you can set down to it. There's a seat, right b'hind you.

(*MRS. BREWSTER sinks into chair, apparently about to faint. LILY ANN disdains her. Enter R. U. E., HELEN BREWSTER and LEONARD FILLMORE. She carries a parasol and a bunch of wild flowers.*)

HELEN (*coming down*. LEONARD *stays up by gate*).
Why, Mother, what's the matter? Are you ill?

(*Goes to MRS. BREWSTER.*)

MRS. BREWSTER. I have been insulted—by that “person” there. (*Indicating LILY ANN.*)

(LEONARD *looks at LILY ANN with a knowing smile.*)

LILY ANN. Land, I ain't hurt her any. Jest sayin' a few things to ease my mind. I guess she'll live through it.

(*Exit LILY ANN to house, with a toss of her head and an indignant sniff.*)

LEONARD FILLMORE (*coming down to R. C.*). You mustn't take Lily Ann too seriously, Mrs. Brewster. She's a privileged character around here, you know.

MRS. BREWSTER. I should say she is. It is insufferable, the way my sister permits that woman to domineer and make herself so offensive. I shall have her dismissed.

LEONARD. M'm—well, I'm inclined to think even you couldn't have that done, Mrs. Brewster. I'm sorry if she has been rude, and I'll speak to Miss Newcomb about it, but—well, I imagine it would be about as easy to dismiss the—er—the pump, or—the barn, as Lily Ann. The farm wouldn't be complete without her.

MRS. BREWSTER (*changing the subject*). Helen, I should like to know where you have been all this time.

HELEN. We have been for a stroll, Mr. Fillmore and I. Are any of those letters for me?

MRS. BREWSTER. One. (*Gives HELEN letter.*)

LEONARD. I am afraid it was largely my fault. I believe I inveigled Miss Brewster into walking rather farther than she otherwise would have done.

MRS. BREWSTER. Indeed! The persuasive powers of

a promising young legal light. How interesting——

HELEN (*smiling, with a slight trace of sarcasm*). Mother!—"promising." He has already quite "arrived," you know. He was telling me of one of his cases. What was it, Mr. Fillmore—defending a yokel whose cow is accused of infringing upon another man's property and destroying some cabbages?

LEONARD. Yes—quite as important as that. I think I shall win my case, too—after a hard judicial struggle. And when I do, I shall come and claim your congratulations. (*At steps.*) Now, if you will excuse me, I will look for Miss Newcomb. I have a little business to transact—and at the same time I will speak to her about the offending Lily Ann.

(*Exit LEONARD to house, with a show of good-natured dignity.*)

MRS. BREWSTER. Helen! I believe he was half laughing at us.

HELEN (*who is reading her letter*). No doubt.

MRS. BREWSTER (*again seated, L.*). And I should like to know what you mean by such a show of intimacy with him—a mere country lawyer. Taking a stroll with him, and——

HELEN. Oh, well, one has to have a little amusement in this forsaken place. Do let me entertain myself in some way. Besides, look what a reward I reaped—this beautiful bouquet.

(*Puts flowers in MRS. BREWSTER'S lap.*)

MRS. BREWSTER (*throwing flowers to ground*). And what of me? I hope you don't think I stay here from choice? Surely, it is better than shutting ourselves up in the city, or going to some cheap boarding-house, as we would have had to do. You know Bar Harbor or Newport were out of the question. Look at these—bills, bills, bills!

Threats—lawsuits. We dare not go back to New York, for fear of our creditors. I don't know what is to become of us!

HELEN. We can't stay and live on Aunt Sarah much longer, that's certain. It is becoming unbearable.

MRS. BREWSTER. If we only could have kept up appearances one more season, you might have—well, something might have turned up.

HELEN (*she has gone up by gate; now comes down*). I suppose you mean I might have sold myself—or you might have sold me. Why not say it? I am in the market—for the highest bidder. Even you are not beyond possibilities.

MRS. BREWSTER. Helen! How can you say such things to me, your own mother? I am sure I have enough to bear, without that.

HELEN. I guess I am about as desperate as you are, for it seems to be up to me.

MRS. BREWSTER. I—I don't know why you need put it in that vulgar way. But, as you say, we cannot stay here much longer. Look at these. (*Showing bills.*) If we go back to New York —

HELEN. There's Dick. If only he could do something —

MRS. BREWSTER. Dick! You know how much good he is to me. I did hope, when he secured that position in the bank at forty dollars a week, that he might at least cease to be a worry to me. But no —

HELEN. Nevertheless, he is still your son and my brother.

MRS. BREWSTER. Much good such a son is to me. I have practically disowned him,—you know it is nearly a year since we have even seen him. No, we must think of something more reliable than Dick, my dear. Now, there was—m'm—Mr. Deering —

HELEN. Yes—one of the likely bidders. Well, if it will be any satisfaction to you, this letter is from him.

MRS. BREWSTER. Helen!—and does he —

HELEN. Yes, Mother, I believe you really have a chance to sell me at a very good price.

MRS. BREWSTER. Helen! I refuse to listen to such talk. You know he is a gentleman—he is worth millions,—you should consider yourself a very lucky girl.

HELEN. I suppose I am, so far as your idea of luck is concerned. But that man—old, gross—the very thought of him repels me.

MRS. BREWSTER. Why, Mr. Deering is not more than forty-five—well, or eight—or nine, perhaps,—and think of all you could command as his wife. But the question is, at present, how we are to manage to get back to New York, pay our bills, and keep up appearances until it can be brought about. I know of just one way—my sister——

HELEN. What!—Aunt Sarah—that simple, countrified old maid? Pray, what could she do?

MRS. BREWSTER. She could help us out of all our difficulties, if she would. You may not know it, my dear, but Sarah Newcomb is rich. At least, she must have a great deal of money. When our father died, Sarah and I came in for everything he had. He had run this farm for many years, as his father had before him, and had made money, which he invested and increased. When he made his will, I chose cash, and, in time, received ten thousand dollars. Sarah kept the farm as her share and has rusticated here ever since, while I—well, I went to the city, met your father—married him—and entered upon the life that appealed to me. Your father's death left me well provided for, but—— Oh, well, it has all vanished, while Sarah,—her money must have accumulated and increased. So, you see, my dear—she is rich.

HELEN. Well, I must say, it is the last thing I ever would have thought of. But even so—do you think you could manage it—or her?

MRS. BREWSTER. It would have to be carefully done, of course. By the way, that Mr. Fillmore is

her legal adviser, I believe. He has charge of all her affairs—he'd know just how much she is worth, and she would accept his advice. M'm—perhaps, after all, you'd better be a bit nice to him.

HELEN. You want me to pump him—to exert an insidious influence, as it were. Oh, very well. Leave it to me. He's rather too nice a fellow to be made a fool of, even if I can do it, but, as you say, something must be done. Anything is better than the poorhouse—and oblivion.

MRS. BREWSTER. And, in the meantime, don't forget that it would be good policy to keep on the right side of all these people—to make as good an impression as possible —

HELEN. Oh, yes, we may as well begin to do the thing up right, even if it is rather late in the day.

MRS. BREWSTER. Helen! sometimes you shock me by your absolute vulgarity. Please do not use such expressions. We shall do nothing dishonorable.

HELEN. I hope not. But I must say, the very idea is repellent to me. I wish it were well over.

(Enter LILY ANN from house, to porch, her hands rolled up in apron.)

LILY ANN. Say! Miss Newcomb wants t' know what you think you'd like t' have for supper—or “dinner” I suppose you'd call it.

MRS. BREWSTER. It's very kind of you to consult us. Isn't it, Helen? Can you think of anything you should like to have, dear?

LILY ANN. Well, of course this ain't no first-class hotel. We ain't got everything.

HELEN. I'm sure, anything Aunt Sarah is kind enough to provide will be most acceptable.

MRS. BREWSTER. Yes—of course —

LILY ANN. Land, you're gittin' mighty unp'tic'lar all of a sudden, seems t' me. Well, how would a good boiled dinner do y'?

MRS. BREWSTER. I'm afraid I don't know just what you mean —

LILY ANN. Huh! I guess you know what a boiled dinner is, all right; used t' live here on the farm y'rself till you went away t' boardin'-school 'n' got in with city folks 'n' their high notions. I guess you've et boiled dinners b'fore now.

MRS. BREWSTER. Indeed!

HELEN. But I never lived on the farm, you know, Lily Ann, so perhaps you will inform me just what a "boiled dinner" is. Something boiled, of course——

LILY ANN. Sure. Cabbage, turnips, p'tatoes, and so forth, boiled in with a nice hunk o' salt pork, part lean. It jest touches the spot with us, but—well, Miss Newcomb ain't let me have one all summer, thinkin' it wouldn't be "stylish" enough for y'. But I guess you'd manage to eat it.

HELEN. I am sure it sounds quite alluring.

LILY ANN. Well, it sounds good and fillin', anyhow. Squash pie goes fine with it—'n'—as I said to Miss Newcomb, "'F they don't like it, let 'em go without." 'T any rate, it's what we're goin' t' have, 'cause I got it over.

(MRS. BREWSTER, as if unable to control herself, has gone up by gate, is looking off L. HELEN shrugs her shoulders good-naturedly. LILY ANN goes to door, meeting LEONARD, who enters from house. He passes her and comes down to R. C. Exit LILY ANN to house.)

LEONARD (looking back at LILY ANN). I hope she hasn't been letting out again. I tried to get here in time to ward her off, but was talking to Miss Newcomb.

HELEN. We have been ordering our dinner, that's all. It's to be a "boiled" one—quite a feast, I believe.

LEONARD. Yes, indeed; you have a treat in store—one of Lily Ann's boiled dinners. And squash pie for dessert, I hope?

HELEN. Yes, I believe that is to be a part of the banquet. (Going part way up c.) Mother, aren't

ALIAS MISS SHERLOCK

you going to take a little nap, in preparation for such a gastronomical—(*Smiling, to LEONARD.*)—is that a good word?—feast?

MRS. BREWSTER. No. I napped quite sufficiently this afternoon, while you and Mr. Fillmore were taking a stroll, and picking wild flowers, I believe. (*LEONARD has crossed to L.; notices the flowers on ground, now glances rather ruefully at them.*) I wish to go in and see Miss Newcomb—if you can spare me for a few moments?

LEONARD. Oh, yes—certainly.

HELEN. Perhaps we will go in the orchard for a little while. I just love those early red apples.

MRS. BREWSTER (*on steps, about to go in house*). But, my dear, just before dinner—and such a dinner!

HELEN. Don't worry—only a nibble, you know.

MRS. BREWSTER. Very well. Then I will leave her in your care, Mr. Fillmore——

LEONARD. Thanks. Trust me.

HELEN (*going L., in a slightly coquettish mood*). Will you come?

LEONARD. Ask me.

HELEN. I do. But, beware—I might tempt you—with an apple, you know——

LEONARD. Oh, what a willing Adam am I! (*They are about to go out L. He surrenders to her mood.*) But poor Adam had only an apple to tempt him, while I—I see a “peach”——

HELEN. Oh, Mr. Fillmore, is that worthy of you?—a lawyer, too!

(*MRS. BREWSTER has stood on steps, or porch, watching them, with a crafty smile. As they exeunt L., she turns and is about to go into house, but meets SARAH and comes back to C. Enter SARAH NEWCOMB from house, down steps to R. C.*)

SARAH. Oh, here you are, Em? I was looking for you. Lily Ann tells me you have ordered a boiled dinner. I hope your headache is better, or I am afraid——

MRS. BREWSTER. It is, thank you. But I ordered nothing. It was entirely the maid's suggestion, I assure you. I simply thought it best to submit. She has pretty much her own way, it strikes me.

SARAH. Well, I suppose she has. I guess I've let her have it so long there's no breaking her of it now. Len Fillmore has just been telling me she said something that offended you. You mustn't mind her, Em. I really couldn't get along without her, you know.

MRS. BREWSTER. I am willing to overlook a great deal, Sarah, but—she actually had the presumption to insinuate that Helen and I are imposing upon you by remaining here. As if you—my own dear sister——

(Wiping eyes, pretending to be near tears.)

SARAH. The idea! Why, you're welcome to stay here as long as you please; you know that. I feel honored to think it's good enough for you, after all your city grandeur and everything. Lily Ann just blurts things out. You mustn't pay any attention to her, Em.

MRS. BREWSTER. Well, I'll try not to do so, hereafter. But, please don't call me "Em," Sarah. It quite annoys me.

SARAH. Does it? Land, it never occurred to me. I can't seem to think of "Emmeline," somehow. You see, it sort o' seems just the same to me as it did when we was girls here together, and we used to always call you "Em" in those days. My, but it's a long time since then, isn't it, Em—meline?

MRS. BREWSTER. Quite too long to mention, or even think about, I should say.

SARAH. I don't see why. 'Tain't no disgrace to be gett'n' old, as I can see. All the best people are doing it, you know. Besides, you ain't more than——

MRS. BREWSTER. Sarah—please——

SARAH. Oh, well, then I won't. But think how long

it is since you were here that other time, when Helen was only about four years old and your boy was only a baby. What a cute little thing he was—your Dick, Emmeline. Why, he must be almost a man now, and a real joy to you.

MRS. BREWSTER. A "joy"—my son! Little you know him, or what he is to me—a trial, a tribulation—I might say even a disgrace. Sometimes I think it would have been better had he never been born.

SARAH. Why, Emmeline, what do you mean? I've wondered why you never said much about him, why you never seemed to want to tell me—— But, Emmeline—your boy—little Dick, your own son—how can you say such a thing?

MRS. BREWSTER. Because it is true. Little has he ever considered me. He spends what he earns on riotous living, in the company of persons who are called "fast," and who tempt him to misdeeds and forgetfulness of what is honest and upright. That is the kind of son I have, Sarah—my "little Dick," as you call him.

SARAH. Dick—the baby boy I used to hold in these arms and cuddle up to me and wish was mine. And then, that summer you let him come here and stay with me, when he was ten years old—because he wasn't very well—the summer that was like heaven to me, because I had him—just like he was mine—my very own. Oh, how I loved him—and he learned to love me, too—and then—I had to give him up—let him go—back to you, who can say such things about him—that he is a trial and a tribulation. Oh, Emmeline—Emmeline Brewster—what kind of mother have you been, if you have let him grow up to be that kind of man?

MRS. BREWSTER. I dare say you think I am to blame. Little you know of such matters—of the world—of life.

SARAH. Maybe I know more about some things than you think I do. 'T any rate, I know enough about the world, and life, to know what a real mother

ought to be, and that the right kind never would talk that way about her own son, no matter what he was, or what he had done. "Mother"—you! You never was fit to be one—it wasn't in you. Forgive me, Em, but I'm goin' to speak the truth, if it does hurt. When you was a girl, it was all for dressing up and looking pretty with you—goin' away to boarding-school and getting "educated," as you called it. Well, you did—there in the "real world" you talk about and that you say I don't know or understand. Then I thank heaven I don't, and I wish you didn't—a world that makes a woman so hard that she calls her own son a tribulation and a disgrace, instead of the blessing he ought to be to her.

MRS. BREWSTER. I refuse to listen to any more of your abuse. Even my own sister has no right to say such things to me.

(She crosses, to exit L., but SARAH bars her way; she pauses.)

SARAH. I guess you'll have to listen, Emmeline, for I'm going to say what I've got to say. I've had it on my mind for some time, and I might as well let it out, right now. I thought it was bad enough, the way you've let your girl grow up to be proud and vain—though I can see she has her soft side and might make a good woman, if she had a chance—but when you talk that way about your boy—about Dick, who was so sweet and cunning when he was a baby, and such a manly little fellow when he was only ten years old—why, that's more than I can listen to and not say something. Oh, Emmeline, why wasn't he my boy? Why was he given to you, that doesn't care for him, instead of to me, who has wanted him and could have been a real mother to him, and loved and protected him and helped him to be a good, true man, instead of what you say he is? It's me that has had the mother-feeling in me all these years, instead of you, though I'm nothing but a poor

little "old maid," with a soul that has starved for what you have neglected and thrown away.

(MRS. BREWSTER *has listened, at first disdainfully, even angrily, then in a gradually somewhat softened mood; she now shows some tenderness for her sister, though still obviously thinking of herself and her own advantage.*)

MRS. BREWSTER. I—I am sorry, Sarah, if you have missed what you think would have been your happiness. But my life has been one that you could not understand. You have no right to upbraid me. Perhaps you have fared better than I have, after all. You at least have a home to shelter you—enough to live in comfort, even luxury, if you wished, the remainder of your life—while I am at the end of my resources. Unless you help me, I see nothing but ruin—despair—ahead.

SARAH. Why, Emmeline, what do you mean? I thought you had a grand home—everything——

MRS. BREWSTER. We have been trying to keep up appearances, Helen and I. She has prospects of marrying a very rich man, if we can manage to go back and resume our accustomed way of living for another season, at least. But unless you can help me, everything I have must go—house—furniture—all. A few thousand dollars, which I feel sure you could spare——

SARAH. A few thousand dollars? Land, I never saw more than a twenty-dollar bill all at one time in my life, as I know of. It was you had the money after Father died. If you've used it up and got in debt—why, it seems to me that's your fault, not mine.

MRS. BREWSTER. Oh, Sarah, I didn't think you could be so hard! So you refuse to help me. You would let me starve—your own sister——

SARAH. Well, I guess you won't need to do that, as long as I have a home and plenty for you too. But of course, if you're so poor, and I'm in what

you call rich, why—well,—I'll speak to Len Fillmore about it. He knows how much I've got and everything. I always take his advice.

MRS. BREWSTER. I should think you need not conform to the opinions of a mere country lawyer.

SARAH. Well, Len may be a "country lawyer," but he's a good one, and I reckon they's a few city ones he could give a few pointers to, when it comes to that. You know, all the smart folks don't live in the city. I guess maybe it's so full it's run over and a few of 'em have to stay in the country. 'T any rate, it's Len Fillmore I'll have a talk with, and maybe we can fix things up for y'. Do y' know, I've sort of thought I'd like to go to the city for a spell myself and see "real life," as you call it? If Len thinks I can afford it, I might go home with you, set you on your feet, and see a little style m'self. Got a room you could spare me in that grand mansion of yours?

MRS. BREWSTER. Why, I hadn't thought of that. I hardly think you would care for our method of living, Sarah, dear. It is so different, you know —so—m'm—so —

SARAH. You needn't get fidgetty about it, yet a while. I ain't begun t' pack my trunk yet. Now I'll have to go in the house and see how Lily Ann's getting along with that supper—or "dinner," as you call it. (*Going to R.*) If you see Len Fillmore, you might tell him I want to see him before he goes home.

MRS. BREWSTER. Very well.

SARAH (*on porch, about to enter house*). And, by the way, if you want that rich man you spoke about to have a chance, it's my opinion you'd better keep an eye on that daughter o' yours and that "plain country lawyer." Goin' to court's sort of in his line, you know, and they do say he's pretty good at pleading a case.

(*Exit SARAH to house; MRS. BREWSTER looks slightly alarmed, starts L., as if to go and seek HELEN*)

and LEONARD. *Enter AARON, L. U. E., with milk-
ing pails.*)

AARON (*coming down through gate*). Was y' lookin' f'r anybuddy, Mis' Brewster?

MRS. BREWSTER. No.

AARON. Oh,—thought mebbe y' was, 'n' I was goin' t' say 'f 'twas y'r daughter 'n' Len Fillmore, I seen 'em out in the orchard there, eat'n' enough apples t' give 'em the stummick-ache. Sett'n' pretty close t' each other, too, on th' stun-wall.

MRS. BREWSTER. I beg of you, spare me your plebeian observations.

AARON. Gosh! didn't know I had any. Sech hi-falutin fixin's ain't in my line. (*He crosses to R., puts pails on porch, comes back to R. C.*) Say, ma'am, if y' don't mind, I wish you'd tell me somethin'. I'm gitt'n' kind o' tired o' this country life. Like t' go to the city and do somethin'. Think they's any chanct f'r a feller like me down there?

MRS. BREWSTER. Scarcely. Your place evidently is where you are.

AARON. Wal, I d' know. Sometimes we country fellers fool y'. Y' wouldn't think it now, t' look at me, thet I've got the makin's of a fust-class detectative in me, would y'?

MRS. BREWSTER. No. It is the last thing I should be willing to believe.

AARON. Thet's what I thought. But they is. Yes, siree—ma'am. Mis' Newcomb, she gits all them books, about crimes 'n' sech, y' know—detectative stories—Sherlock Holmes, Ashton-Kirk and all them—'n' sometimes she lets me read 'em. They suttinly do give a feller an insight int' the way things go there among you city folks. Must be a pretty hard lot, come right down to it.

MRS. BREWSTER (*about to go out L.*). I have no desire to listen to your opinions. I understand that Miss Newcomb is in the habit of reading those lurid romances, and I am much surprised that she

should burden her mind with such sensational trash.

AARON. Oh, she jest dotes on 'em; says the biggest men read 'em. Even Len Fillmore. He says they help him in his law business.

MRS. BREWSTER. Indeed! I must say, that is about the opinion I had of him and his "legal ability."
(*Calling, as she goes off L.*) Helen—Helen, where are you?

(*Exit MRS. BREWSTER, L. 2 E.*)

AARON (*going to L., calling after her*). Better tell her 'n' Len t' stop eatin' them apples, 'cause Lily Ann says we're goin' t' have a biled dinner, 'n' they won't have room for it. (AARON *goes to R., takes pails and is about to enter house, when he turns, glances off L. U. E., stops, looks, then sets down pails and goes up to gate, looking off L., with show of interest. Hurries off L. U. E., and, after a pause, reënters, leading DICK BREWSTER by the arm. DICK is dusty, pale and almost exhausted.*) Who be y', 'n' what d' y' want? (*Leads DICK L., to seat; DICK sinks down; AARON regards him suspiciously.*) Why don't y' speak? Sick?

DICK BREWSTER. No. Only tired—about played out. I—I've walked a long distance, and I haven't had anything to eat since—since last night.

AARON. Y' ain't? Gosh, I should think you *would* be weak. M'm—y' don't look jest like a tramp.

DICK (*with some spirit*). I'm not. You needn't think I'm anything like that. I—is this where Miss Newcomb lives?

AARON. Why, yes—this is her place. You don't want t' see her, do y'?

DICK. I want to know if Mrs. Brewster is here—Mrs. Brewster and—and Miss Brewster.

AARON. Oh, you know them, do y'? Yes, they're here. I should say they be—hev be'n sence I d' know when, 'n' it looks like they was goin' t' keep right on bein'.

DICK. I—I want to see Mrs. Brewster—right away.
Will you tell her, please?

AARON. M'm—why, yes, I guess so. (*Looks off L.*)
She's out in the orchard there, with her daughter
'n' Len Fillmore. I see 'em coming, now.

DICK (*rising, almost tottering, starting to go R.*). I—
I don't want to see anybody else—just my—just
Mrs. Brewster—or Helen ——

AARON. Wal, then, you jest come up here and wait a
minute and I'll see if I can fix it. (*AARON assists
DICK off R., beyond house, then returns.*) Stay
right there till I tell y'.

(*Enter HELEN and LEONARD, L. 2 E.*)

HELEN (*laughing; evidently forgetting herself for the
moment and acting with a natural manner of
good humor*). I'm afraid we're in for it. At
least I am—for a good scolding. I must have
eaten at least half a dozen of those apples. It's
all your fault.

LEONARD. Oh, say,—come, now; that's reversing
Scripture, and will never do. "The woman did
tempt me," you know.

HELEN. Nothing of the sort. It was the man who
did the tempting, this time.

LEONARD. All the better, since you yielded. I didn't
know I had the power. Thanks for the compli-
ment.

HELEN. You might be welcome, had I intended to
pay you one; but I didn't.

LEONARD. Alas, poor Adam! He's bound to get the
worst of it. Thus does he have another fall—
from the heights of expectation to the depths of
despair.

HELEN. My, what an ancient joke—going back to the
first pair ——

LEONARD. And the first apple.

HELEN. Oh!—worse and worse!

(*Enter MRS. BREWSTER L. 2 E., crossing to R.*)

MRS. BREWSTER. Helen, I am going to my room, and you'd better come too. After your walk—and such a feast of apples—I should think you would need a little rest and quiet before dinner.

HELEN. Very well, Mother, I'll come right in.

(HELEN crosses to R. LEONARD goes up C.)

LEONARD. And I think I'll say "Good afternoon."

MRS. BREWSTER. By the way, Mr. Fillmore, Miss Newcomb wished me to inform you that she would like to see you again for a moment before you leave.

LEONARD. Thanks. Then I'll wait.

(Exit MRS. BREWSTER to house.)

HELEN. Yes, you'd better. You might get invited to stay and have some of that "biled dinner," you know.

LEONARD. That's so,—guess I had. Squash pie, too. Umm—the Garden of Eden was nothing like this.

(Exit HELEN, to house, followed by LEONARD. Enter AARON, R., looks about, then summons DICK, who enters and stands by fence, R. C.)

AARON. You stay right here. I'll see 'f I can git her. (DICK stands leaning on fence, weak, and showing some agitation. AARON goes over by porch, looks in house, making motions.) She sees me—she's comin'.

(AARON goes and helps DICK to C., partially concealing him, as HELEN enters.)

HELEN. Did you want me, Aaron?

AARON. M'm—yes, Miss Brewster. They's some-buddy here 't wants t' see y'. It's ——

DICK (disclosing himself). Helen ——!

HELEN. Dick! Dick—what are you doing here?

DICK. Where's Mother? I—I want to see her ——

(He totters; HELEN goes and supports him.)

HELEN. But, Dick, how did you happen to come here? We didn't expect you. You are ill—is anything the matter?

DICK. Yes, lots is the matter. I—I'm in trouble, Helen. I——

(He looks about, as if not wishing to speak before AARON. HELEN motions to AARON, who nods and exits R., beyond house, taking pails.)

HELEN. There, we are alone now. Tell me, Dick—what is it—what is the trouble?

(She has assisted him to seat, L.; he sits, she stands by him, showing more surprise than tenderness, but is not wholly without sympathy.)

DICK. I've—run away——

HELEN. Run away? But why—from what?

DICK. I can't tell you now. I've got to have money, that's all. Plenty of it—to get away—out of the country. Where's Mother?

HELEN. She couldn't help you, any more than I can. What do you mean—what have you done?

DICK. Never mind that. There isn't time. I'm your brother, that's all, and her son, and you've got to help me. It's for your sake as well as for mine, I guess, if you don't want——

HELEN. Oh, Dick, will you never learn to behave yourself—to be a *man*? Mother is almost desperate already, with ruin staring her in the face, and now to have you come here in this condition—you, who ought to help her, instead of bringing disgrace upon her. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

DICK. And so would you be, if you were any kind of a sister, instead of turning on me now, when I'm facing—— *(Enter SARAH from house to porch; DICK sees her and shrinks down, as if to hide.)*
Who's that? I don't want to see——

HELEN (*disclosing him*). Aunt Sarah, this is my brother —

SARAH (*coming down, looking at DICK, at first uncomprehendingly, then with gradual recognition and dawning tenderness*). You don't mean that—that it is Dick—little Dick? Why, you—if you haven't grown up into a man. The last time I saw you, you were just a little fellow—that was—it was twelve years ago, and you were only ten years old—and now — Why, you're sick—something is the matter —

DICK (*breaking down*). Oh, I can't stand any more—I'm played out. I can't go any further.

(*He has tried to rise, but sinks back on to seat. SARAH goes to him, sits, puts arm about him, affectionately.*)

SARAH. Why, of course you can't—you needn't. You've got home, Dick. You've come right here, where we've been waiting for you and are glad to see you —

DICK. Oh, you don't know—you don't know —

HELEN. I hope Mother doesn't come.

SARAH. You go in the house and see that she doesn't. I'll talk to Dick and see if I can't find out what's the matter.

(*HELEN goes L., to steps; DICK starts up, but sinks back, as SARAH gently draws him down beside her.*)

DICK. But I must see her—I want to tell her —

SARAH. Maybe it would be just as well if you told me. I'm your Aunt Sarah, though you've sort of forgotten me, haven't you? But I haven't forgotten you, and—I—I guess maybe it would be better if you told me about it first, then we'll see —

DICK. You'll help me—to get away —

SARAH (*to HELEN, who still stands L.*). You go,

Helen. He will be all right. (*Exit HELEN L., to house.*) Now, Dick, tell me ——

DICK. Oh, I can't—I can't! I don't know what to do. They may be after me by this time ——

SARAH. Who? Who is after you?

DICK. The police. They may have found out by this time. I didn't do it—I didn't—but they will think I did. They'll find out I was there, some way, and then—unless I can get away, where they can't find me ——

SARAH. But tell me about it. What was it—how did you happen to come here?

DICK. Why, I had heard Mother and Helen speak of you—and I remembered you, too—about the summer I stayed here, so long ago, and how good you were to me—and then I thought they—or you—could help me in some way. I didn't know where else to go. I've got to have money,—she's my mother, if I haven't done just right, and she's got to help me. Where is she? I must see her.

SARAH. Pretty soon, maybe; but tell me first—what do they think you have done?

DICK. It's murder—that's what they'll say. But I didn't do it—no, no, I didn't! It was somebody else—but they'll have it on me, if they find out. I was there—I was found with the gun—I'm innocent. But they'd never believe it—I'll have to go away ——

(*He starts up, as if to go. SARAH again detains him.*)

SARAH. But how—where was it—when ——

DICK. Never mind. Let me go. It may be too late—they may have followed me. Where can I go?

SARAH. You can't go anywhere. You're in no condition. You'll have to stay right here, till we can fix you up and decide what to do. What I want now is, for you to tell me all about it—just what happened—what you had to do with it, and everything—and if it's possible, I'll help you.

DICK. You will? You'll give me money—to get away?

SARAH. I don't know about that, but I'll do just the best I can. You can trust me, Dick—trust me with your very life.

DICK. It's worth a lot, just to hear somebody talk like that—to know somebody believes in me a little bit and wants to help me. It's an old story,—the way I've been made a fool of by a woman. But I loved her—trusted her—I thought she was as good as she was beautiful. She thought I was a rich man's son—that was all she cared—and then, when she found out I was spending every cent I had, just to buy her flowers and suppers and—then she tried to throw me over. That made me desperate, and one night—three nights ago—I insisted on going home with her. She tried to get rid of me, but I went, and when we got there she told me she had no more use for me—that I wasn't worth bothering with. Then I threatened her—I'll admit that, though I didn't really mean it—I only thought perhaps I could make her change her mind. Then another man came—a really rich one, I suppose—and she told me to get out. I wouldn't, so she made me go in another room, behind some curtains—she was afraid he'd be jealous, too—and when he came in, he suspected there was somebody else there, and they had a row. I stood looking through the curtains, watching them, and all of a sudden ——

SARAH. Yes—then—all of a sudden ——?

DICK. There was a shot, and Lora—Miss Navarre—fell—dead!

SARAH. Dead! She was killed? But who—who did it? Dick—not ——

DICK. No! You needn't think I did it. I didn't. I don't know who did. All I know is, that I was alone, there in that room, behind those curtains, and that it was dark in there, so that I couldn't see. And I didn't hear any one—but a hand reached over my shoulder—there in the dark—and fired that shot ——

SARAH. Did you—see—the hand?

DICK. No. But I felt something—for an instant—it just seemed to touch my shoulder—that was all.

SARAH. But there must have been somebody else there—in that room.

DICK. Yes, when I went in—but I didn't see anyone, as there was no light in there. They must have been waiting there all the time—for her.

SARAH. And after—after that shot was fired, what did you do?

DICK. Why, at first I just stood there, for a minute, I was so frightened and dazed —

SARAH. But that other man that was there with her—what did he do?

DICK. I just caught a glimpse of him—kneeling down by her—he held her up a little—and just then Miss Navarre's maid rushed in from the hall, came across and threw apart the curtains where I was, and there on the floor, just by my feet, was—the gun! She picked it up, stared at me, and cried, "You have killed her!"

SARAH. And the man —

DICK. I didn't notice. I don't remember. All I know is, that the maid went to the telephone—to call up the police, I suppose—and before they could stop me I rushed out—and got away. Then I came here—it was all I could do—and — Oh, you don't think I did it—you don't believe I'm a murderer? You're my aunt—my mother's own sister—you won't let them hang me —

SARAH. No, no, Dick—I want to believe you—I want to help you, if you are innocent, and I can. You're the same as my own boy. I want to save you. Look at me, Dick—look me straight in the face and tell me, God seeing you and hearing every word you say—that you didn't kill that woman—you don't know who did. Can you do that, Dick?

DICK. Yes—I can—I do! (*He straightens up, and, with a clear, candid expression—finding sudden courage and determination—looks her squarely in the eyes, and, in slightly wavering, but honest,*

convincing tones, speaks.) I swear to you, I didn't kill that woman—I don't know who did. As I hope for eternal salvation—so help me God—I am—innocent!

(SARAH stands motionless for a moment, one hand on each of DICK's shoulders, looking searchingly into his eyes, her face showing infinite tenderness and pity. His gaze never falters. After an eloquent pause, she suddenly clasps him in her arms, holding him closely. He buries his face against her shoulder, sobbing gently.)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Parlor or reception-room in the New York residence of MRS. BREWSTER, handsomely furnished. An alcove, or hallway, across L. U. E., shows staircase and leads to front door off L.; there is a hallrack in alcove. Door L. 2 E.; another in flat R. C., and one R. Table down R. C., with few books, etc.; smaller table, or stand, up R. C., with telephone; also button of electric call-bell; davenport, L., chairs, etc.*

(*At rise, door-bell is ringing off L. U. E. Enter HENSON R., crosses, exits L. U. E. As he exits, enter MRS. BREWSTER down stairs, comes down to R. C., just in time to receive RALPH DEERING, who is shown in by HENSON. He hands light top-coat, hat and cane to HENSON, who leaves them on rack and exits R. DEERING comes down to C.*)

MRS. BREWSTER. Mr. Deering—how good of you to call so soon! I am delighted to see you.

DEERING. Delighted to be here, I assure you. Miss Brewster was kind enough to write me when you were to return, and, you see, I have lost little time in coming.

MRS. BREWSTER. And you are a welcome visitor—the first we have had. We returned much earlier than usual, you know. I had some business to attend to, and—well, we were satiated with “rural felicity”; for we were quite in the country, you know—on a farm, in fact.

DEERING. Quite a change, I should imagine, from former seasons?

(*They are seated.*)

MRS. BREWSTER. Decidedly; but just what we required, after a strenuous social season, and very

beneficial to both Helen and myself. Neither of us felt equal to Bar Harbor or Newport—and they have become such an old story, summer after summer—so I thought it an excellent opportunity to visit my sister, back at our old home. Oh, yes, a decided change; quite the thing, however, you know—for tired nerves, and all that.

DEERING. But rather irksome, no doubt, after a while ——

MRS. BREWSTER. Terribly so. But, then, it was years since I had seen my sister, and I felt guilty, having so long neglected her, so I summoned courage to go and make her a little visit. It did her so much good, dear soul, I felt fully rewarded. I have brought her home with me.

DEERING. Ah,—for a little glimpse of city life, I suppose?

MRS. BREWSTER. Yes—her first. I had quite a task, persuading her to come. She has always been such a home-body—formerly resisted all my importunities to come and stay with me. Of course, she is quite out of her element here. Not that she is not a dear—but such a little country mouse—so shy,—I am sure you understand. (*She rises; he does the same.*) I will call Helen. She will be delighted to see you.

(*Goes up, presses button.*)

DEERING. You think so?

MRS. BREWSTER. I am sure of it. (*Enter HENSON R.*) Henson, inform Miss Brewster that Mr. Deering is here. You will find her in her room.

(*Exit HENSON, L. U. E., up the stairs.*)

DEERING. I think you understand what my feelings are towards your daughter, Mrs. Brewster—at least, I hope you will not be displeased if I tell you that it is my desire to make her my wife.

MRS. BREWSTER. Nothing could give me greater happiness. Ah, to be sure of my dear child's future—in your care—it would indeed be a blessing.

DEERING. The greater share would be bestowed upon me, I am sure. But may I hope—that Miss Brewster—Helen——

MRS. BREWSTER. You will meet with no discouragement in that direction, I am sure.

(She pauses, as she sees HELEN, who comes down-stairs; DEERING also sees her, goes part way up C., to meet her. HELEN comes down, greets him with politeness, but little show of warmth.)

DEERING. Miss Brewster!—it has been a long time——

(HENSON comes down-stairs, exits R.)

HELEN. How do you do, Mr. Deering? It is very kind of you to call so soon after our return.

DEERING. I was only too glad to have the opportunity. In fact, I came up from my country place expressly for the purpose of being the first to welcome you.

MRS. BREWSTER. How very, very kind of you. Was it not, Helen?

HELEN. Most kind, I am sure.

MRS. BREWSTER *(who has gone up R.)*. I hope you will stay to dinner, Mr. Deering—and take such as we can offer you. Things are not wholly in running order yet, but——

DEERING. Thank you; but I scarcely think I shall be able to do so, to-day. May I not hope to come again—soon?

MRS. BREWSTER. Indeed—yes; only let us know. And now, if you will excuse me——

(He assents; she exits R.)

DEERING. I hear you had a very quiet summer, Miss Brewster? Quite in the midst of “rural felicity.”

HELEN. Oh, that is what Mother calls it, is it? I am afraid she would speak in less poetic terms if she were to express her real opinion. We were unutterably bored—I thought it never would end.

DEERING. I think I understand. You were not in the right setting there—you, who were made for big places, for brilliant crowds—regal surroundings—where you can reign as queen ——

HELEN (*smiling, with a lift of her eyebrows*). Dear me, who is getting poetic now? You honor me too much.

DEERING. No, no—I could not do that. (*He gets close to her, speaking with a warmth of feeling which repels her, though she means to encourage him; in spite of herself, however, slightly drawing away.*) You know my feelings for you—this is not the first time I have tried to express them. Miss Brewster—Helen—tell me I don't hope in vain—that I may make you the happiest woman in the world.

HELEN. Ah,—that is a pretty big order. Do you think you could fill it?

DEERING. Only let me try. I can give you all that a woman can wish—a beautiful home, gorgeous clothes, jewels—you shall have everything that money can buy. You shall lead them all—have what you will—do what you choose ——

HELEN (*somewhat cynically*). I am afraid it takes more than all that to make a woman happy, Mr. Deering—some women.

DEERING. But devotion—love—all my heart ——

HELEN. And isn't that what you would expect in return—love, devotion ——? And if I could not give them?

DEERING. You could give yourself—your radiant, beautiful self. That is what I want—you, you!

(*He is about to take her in his arms; she shows at first some shrinking, but makes an effort to yield—is about to do so, when the door-bell rings. This gives her the opportunity to turn from him; he is compelled to release her, with some annoyance. Enter HENSON, R., crosses, exits L. U. E.*)

HELEN. Will you go in the library? I will join you there.

DEERING (*again approaching her, but she goes part way up c., he desists, goes R.*). Very well. I will wait for you there—anxiously. Don't be long——

HELEN. No. I will come to you—at once.

(*Exit DEERING, R. HELEN shudders slightly, with evident repulsion and relief at his absence. She is R. C. Enter HENSON, L. U. E.*)

HENSON. Mr. Fillmore.

(*HELEN's attitude changes; her expression brightens, denoting pleasure, which she is unable to conceal.*)

HELEN. You may show him in, Henson. (*Exit HENSON, L. U. E. HELEN stands looking up L. U. E. expectantly. For the moment she becomes her natural self, greeting LEONARD FILLMORE cordially when he appears. Enter LEONARD FILLMORE, L. U. E., followed by HENSON, who exits R.*) Mr. Fillmore—this is quite a surprise! How do you do?

LEONARD. Fine, thanks—and feeling better still—now. Needn't ask how you are—you're looking scrumptious.

HELEN. My!—all of that? M'm—well, apples agree with me, you know.

LEONARD. And “biled dinners”—squash pie? Say, the farm lost all its charm after you left. Excuse me—I guess there's no law against paying a few compliments—I'm a lawyer, and I know, you see—if a fellow means 'em. With you and Miss Newcomb both gone—well, it was too much for me.

HELEN. One cannot imagine the farm without Aunt Sarah. How glad she will be to see you!

LEONARD. I suppose she will. How is she?

HELEN. She's well. A bit homesick though, I fear—but brave, as I also try to be. But it's hard, with

all we have on our minds—and trying to keep it from Mother.

LEONARD. So she doesn't know yet?

HELEN. No. I want to keep it from her as long as possible. She has enough to bear. Oh, Mr. Fillmore, what is going to happen? Do you think they will find my brother—convict him? I cannot think of it—I dare not——

LEONARD. We're going to do everything there is to be done for him, and I feel it in my bones everything'll come out all right. Why, I don't see how Fate itself could defeat such a spirit as your Aunt Sarah shows—she's just bound to save her "boy," as she calls him—and, in spite of all obstacles, I feel that she'll do it—and I mean to help. Just you leave it to us—and try to look on the bright side. I can't bear to see you worry——

HELEN. You are very kind. You do help me—you make me feel better——

LEONARD. Do I? That's great.—M'm—if I—well, I'd like to feel better, too—if you'd just say the word. I know I haven't the right to ask it—just a plain, country lawyer like me—but—you're not mad, are you?

HELEN. Mad? Why, of course not. How could I be? Besides, being poor is no disgrace—and as for "plain,"—well, there might be two opinions about that.

LEONARD (*impulsively; forgetting himself*). Miss—er—Helen——

HELEN (*suddenly realizing that she is encouraging him too much; changing her mood—repulsing him, though not too pronouncedly*). But Dick—you haven't told me. What about him? Where is he?

LEONARD. That's right. We have no right to think of other things now. But you—you see, I sort of forgot, and—— Why, he's here. I brought him with me.

HELEN. Here?

LEONARD. Yes; we stayed there in Brookville nearly

a week, you know, after you all left, and then I decided the only thing to do was to bring him here, have him give himself up, and stand the chances. Miss Newcomb thought so, too.

HELEN. But if they convict him——

LEONARD. Well, there doesn't seem to be much use running away. He wants to—thinks they'd never find him—but they always do, and it would be all the worse when they did—they'd hold it against him—that he was afraid——

HELEN. Afraid? Of course he's afraid—so am I—afraid of the horror, the disgrace! Oh, it seems too terrible to be true. How can I ever bear it?

LEONARD. Oh, say now, don't give way like that. I can't bear to see you, you know. I——

HELEN (*looking L. U. E.*). Is he—there?

LEONARD. Yes. Your man remembered him, it seems——

HELEN. Henson? Yes, he has been with us for years——

LEONARD. And he's keeping him out there for the present. Do you want to see him?

HELEN. No. Not yet. I can't. I have a caller. He is waiting for me, in the library.

LEONARD. M'm—oh, a "he" caller!

HELEN. Yes, and a very important "he." So I must ask you to excuse me. But I will have Henson tell Aunt Sarah you are here.

(Goes up; is about to press button.)

LEONARD. Oh—all right; and then, after a while, will you—er—have him inform you that *I am still here?*

HELEN. Perhaps. If I can get rid of that other "he."

(She smiles, not wholly able to conceal her real feelings for him; he looks relieved.)

LEONARD. Thanks.

(Enter HENSON, L. U. E.)

HELEN. Henson, tell Miss Newcomb that Mr. Fillmore is here. You will find her in her room, I think—the blue room.

(Exit HENSON up-stairs.)

LEONARD. “Blue” room? Pretty appropriate, seems to me. Kind of in that state myself, unless you change it.

(HELEN ignores this remark, though she looks back with a faint smile as she exits, R. LEONARD looks after her, adoringly; goes up R., then comes back, shaking his head doubtfully, but with an expression of determination. Enter HENSON, coming down stairs; part way to C.)

HENSON. Miss Newcomb will be right down, sir. *(About to go, lingers.)* Beg pardon, sir, but—Master Dick. He looks very down—and sick like. Is anything the matter, may I ask, sir?

LEONARD. Why, I guess he isn’t just feeling his best.

HENSON. No, sir; that’s how it struck me, sir. I hope you will pardon me, if I seem too familiar, but Master Dick always was a favorite of mine, and I’ve wondered often, without daring to mention it, what had become of him, so to speak, and how he was. He’s been absent for the greater part of a year, if I remember rightly.

LEONARD. Yes. He’s been away, I believe. You say Miss Newcomb will be right down?

HENSON. Yes, sir; to be sure, sir. I beg pardon.

(Exit HENSON, L. U. E. LEONARD stands down R., by table, not seeing SARAH, as she comes down-stairs, enters L. U. E.; sees him, with a pleased expression; comes down, stands close to him a moment, before she speaks.)

SARAH. Well!

LEONARD *(starts, slightly; turns, sees her, speaks in an assumed matter-of-fact manner)*. Fair to mid-

dling, ma'am,—and hope I see you the same;—first-class, I mean. How—*are*—you?

SARAH (*as they shake hands, warmly*). Oh, Len, it's good for sore eyes to see you! I've been waiting and hoping and praying, expectin' you every minute—and, now you're here, I declare, I could almost hug y'!

LEONARD. Why—almost? Make it a real one.

SARAH. Oh, Len, I've almost died here, this last week with six or eight months in it. It's been terrible——

LEONARD. Pshaw! that'll never do. I thought you were the brave one. It won't do for you to give up.

SARAH. No, of course, and I don't mean to; but—well, it's the lonesomeness of it. I'm like a cat in a strange garret, and as homesick as anything—at least, I suppose that's what the feeling is I've got here—and here—and oh, all over me. But sit down, Len, and tell me—everything.

(*They sit.*)

LEONARD (*speaking rapidly, pretending to misunderstand her*). Well, when I left, the brindle cow was beginning to wean her calf, the pigs were fatter 'n ever and just fit to kill—Aaron Flint seemed to be getting along a little better in a certain direction—I guess their being left there alone sort of softens the obdurate lady—and—anything else?

SARAH. Leonard Fillmore! You know it isn't all that I want to know. Of course, it's that, too—and I'm glad if Lily Ann has begun to give in a little, though goodness knows it's time—but it's my boy, Len—Dick!—how is he—where is he—and——

LEONARD. Oh, he's well and safe and not far off. But first I want to hear about you. How do you like it here?

SARAH. Oh, as well as could be expected, I suppose—me, in this hifalutin place! But I've wished I

was back home, every minute. Such foolishness—such extravagance!

LEONARD. Well, it was your own doings—you would do it, you know ——

SARAH. Yes, I know, and I'm not sorry as I know of. But it's something terrible, the way Em has lived and got into debt, trying to "keep up appearances," as she calls it. It's simply scandalous—a "butler" and everything. Land, he's the stiffest thing in the shape of a man I ever did see. I was fairly afraid of him at first, the way he puffed himself up and said "Yes, Madam," "No, Madam," and "Madam this" and "Madam that," till I up and told him I wa'n't a "Madam" and had no desire to be, and wouldn't he please just call me Miss Newcomb. I'm beginning to get a little bit used to him now, and to a few other things, but, I declare—I guess the farm's the place for me.

LEONARD. Nonsense. I'd trust you with the best of them. They can't make a fool of you.

SARAH. Too late, maybe. But mebbe it'd be just as well to let some folks think they can.

LEONARD. Who—why ——

SARAH. Well, some of the city folks, the kind that think us from the country are all as green as grass. Mebbe I can get the best of some of 'em and find out a few things all the easier, if I let 'em think I don't know a street-car from a steam-boat. Not but what I do, and I guess I can see through a barn door when it's wide open ——

LEONARD (*laughing*). Well, I should say you can!

SARAH. But if some of the big-bug detectives and all, that are trying to find Dick and prove he's—what they'll say he is—think I'm but a poor, simple little old maid from the country, why, I guess it'll make the way all the clearer for me when I try to show 'em a thing or two.

LEONARD. Well, now, I don't know but there's something in that.

SARAH. I'm here to save my boy—and it's any means

to that end. You know how crazy I've always been about reading those detective stories, Len—murder mysteries and such—"trash," you call 'em?

LEONARD. Why, yes,—I guess you've read a hundred.

SARAH. Say seven hundred and you'll be nearer to it.

Well, I'm glad I have. They've sort of given me an insight into things—clues and such. I feel as if I could beat the best detective in New York City at his own game. I'd like the chance—and maybe I'll have it before we get through.

LEONARD. I guess you'll find it a hard job, Miss Newcomb. They're a slick lot, and I'm afraid in this instance they'll have it pretty much their own way. To tell the truth, I don't see a loophole as yet.

SARAH. But there must be one, Len—there's got to be. There always is. In all those detective stories, the one you're sure did it and that everything's against, never did. It's when they come up against a blank wall and you think there's no way around, through, or over, that a way opens up, after all. And there will this time, Len—there must.

LEONARD. I hope so. But don't you think you need a bigger man than I am to help you, Miss Newcomb? I'm only a country lawyer, after all, you know, without much experience——

SARAH. Now, see here, Len Fillmore, don't you begin that all over again. You know my opinion, and that ends it. If you're not what they call "a big man" yet, you're going to be, and maybe this is your chance to prove it. I want you to show 'em what you can do,—you and me together—in spite of the best of 'em. They may think we are two greenies from the country and as easy as pie. Well, let 'em think so—till we open their eyes and show 'em a thing or two.

LEONARD (*giving her his hand*). We will. Put it there.

SARAH. That's the way to talk. Go ahead, don't

leave a stone unturned, till we've overthrown that stone wall we're up against. I'm back of you with all I've got—to my last cent—all I can beg, borrow or—I was going to say “steal,” and I d' know but I'd do even that to save Dick. But where is he? Can't I see him?

LEONARD. Sure. He's right here.

SARAH. Here,—in this house!—and you haven't told me, all this time? (*Going up, looking off L. U. E., excited.*) Where is he? I want to see him!

LEONARD. And so you shall. But I want to be sure his mother doesn't know he is here. Helen—Miss Brewster—thinks it best for her not to know about it, yet.

SARAH. There's no danger. She's gone to her room and won't come down till dinner's ready, probably. Where is Helen? Have you seen her?

LEONARD. M'm—why, she just went in what they call the library, to see a caller—a “he” one.

SARAH. Oh, I suppose it's that rich Mr. Deering her mother's trying to catch for her. She can't endure him and I know it—since she saw a certain other “he” I could mention ——

LEONARD. Miss Newcomb,—you're on the wrong scent. There isn't a chance in the world for me ——

SARAH. Who said anything about you? I guess there's more than two “he's” in the world. 'T any rate, she ain't good enough for you—vain, stuck-up thing!

LEONARD. No,—she isn't that! You wrong her.

SARAH. Oh! stickin' up for her, are you? Sure sign. Guess you can't fool me. I've read too many detective stories, you know, not to see a clue when it's laying around loose, and I found a pretty good one sometime ago, in that direction.

LEONARD. But don't you think you're up against another stone wall?

SARAH. Well, if I am, I'm pretty good at climbing over—and I might give you a boost, if necessary.

LEONARD. Thanks. I guess I'll need it. (*He has*

gone up to L. U. E.; she is close to him.) And now I'll get Dick.

(Exit LEONARD, L. U. E. SARAH stands, looks off, anxiously. There is a short pause, then DICK enters L. U. E., cautiously, looking about, as if afraid. He looks much neater than in first act, but is still pale, showing signs of his fear and worry. SARAH welcomes him joyously, taking him in her arms, in silence. He brightens a bit as he sees her.)

SARAH (after a moment's pause). Dick—my boy—my poor boy!

DICK. Is nobody else here—Mother—Helen——?

SARAH. Not now. You can see Helen in a few minutes, maybe. I don't know about your mother. She doesn't know yet, and—but we'll see. Just now I want you to talk to me a little. (She has led him to davenport, L.; sits by his side.) How are you, Dick? Keeping up bravely?

DICK. I'm trying to, Aunt Sarah, but it's hard. It's been almost more than I could stand. If it wasn't for you—and Mr. Fillmore—I guess I'd end it all. I couldn't face it alone. I don't know as I can, anyway. There doesn't seem to be a chance for me—not a chance.

SARAH. Why, yes, there is, Dick. There's always a chance. I believe in you—so does he—and there's sure to be some way of proving your innocence. We're going to find it, too, and save you. Aren't we, Len?

(LEONARD has been standing R., not listening to them; he has looked off R. in a manner that shows he is thinking of HELEN and her companion. He now turns, comes to C.)

LEONARD. Sure. Of course we are.

DICK. You say that, but if you meant it—if you really wanted to save me—you'd let me get away. You wouldn't ask me to stay here and face it—

no, nor you either, Aunt Sarah. I tell you I can't——

(He springs up, as if to go; SARAH detains him.)

SARAH. Dick—my boy!

LEONARD. There, there; you'll be all right. You must listen to reason.

DICK. Reason—reason! You call it "reason" for me to stay here and give myself up—without a chance in the world! I tell you, they've got it on me. But if I don't give myself up, they'll never find me. They can't. They don't know my name—or anything. I'll be safe, if you'll only let me go away.

SARAH. Are you sure they don't—any of 'em, know?

DICK. No,—of course they don't. Miss Navarre was the only one. The maid never saw me before, nor that man. I got away before anybody else came. I tell you they haven't a chance in the world. Let me go! You will—you must! You don't want me to stay here and get hanged—for what I never did? You can't make me do that—you can't!

(He breaks down, sinking on couch and covering face with hands. SARAH sits by him, striving to comfort him.)

LEONARD. You're sure nobody knows that it was you in that woman's room when she was killed—not the man, nor the maid?

DICK. No. Neither of them ever saw me before. I used to meet Miss Navarre at the stage door and take her out to supper—but that night was the first time she ever let me go home with her. She didn't want to, then, but I went. So, you see, her maid never had seen me, and as for that man who was there—he was a perfect stranger to me.

LEONARD. If that's so—why, the police haven't a thing to go by—no name—no picture. So long as neither of those two sees you——

SARAH. But would you want him to run away?

LEONARD. If we believe him innocent, and that is his only chance—as it seems to be—I don't know but it would be the best thing for him to do.

DICK. Yes, yes,—of course it is. That's what I've been trying to tell you all along, only you wouldn't listen to me. If I go away somewhere, it'll be all right. But if they find out who I am, and catch me—I tell you everything is dead against me unless you let me go away. You will—won't you? Don't you see, Aunt Sarah?—it's my only chance!

SARAH. There must be some way of finding out the truth. You are innocent, Dick—I believe that—and I mean to go to work and prove it ——

DICK. But if you couldn't—if you failed ——

LEONARD. Yes, Miss Newcomb, we've got to think of that—if you failed. And I'm afraid the chances are that you would. I've been looking into the matter thoroughly, trying to see what defense we could put up, and I must confess it looks pretty dubious. The police say all they have to do is to find their man—they've put their machine to work to find him—and it's more than likely they'll succeed, if Dick stays here.

DICK. When can I go—to-night—now?

SARAH. Oh, not to-night—you can't go to-night, Dick! You must stay here till to-morrow morning, then Mr. Fillmore can see that you get away—if that's what's best, and I don't know but it is. You must be saved, Dick,—some way.

DICK. But I can't wait—I'm afraid ——

LEONARD. He's right. He must go to-night. You keep him here for an hour or so, Miss Newcomb, and in the meantime I'll go and get some things ready—buy a ticket—and then come back for him. But where to—where shall he go?

SARAH. Why not to the farm? Lily Ann and Aaron would look after him.

LEONARD. No, not yet; they might trace him there—through his mother—they do all sorts of unlikely things, you know. He'll have to go farther away.

—say to the West. I'll buy a ticket. He can leave late to-night.

DICK. Yes—I know—I can do it —

(He braces up, looking more hopeful, rising. LEONARD starts up L.)

SARAH. All right. Just as you say, Len. You go and make the arrangements. I'll take Dick up to my room. Nobody will see him there. But I suppose we'd better tell Helen?

LEONARD. Yes, it would be best to let her know. We can still keep it from his mother. *(LEONARD goes up, about to exit, but pauses, looks off R.)* They are coming—Miss Brewster and —

(DICK starts to go; SARAH holds him, then leads him to L. 2 E.)

SARAH. Here—come in here—till he goes—then I'll get you up-stairs.

(Exeunt SARAH and DICK, L. 2 E. LEONARD glances R., then goes up, gets hat and coat, exits L. U. E. Enter HELEN and DEERING, R. She seems somewhat disturbed; he shows evidence of anger and chagrin.)

DEERING. Do you mean to say that this is your final answer—you refuse me?

HELEN. Yes. I cannot be your wife, Mr. Deering,—I don't love you.

DEERING. But if I am willing to wait—to run the chance of being able to win your love?

HELEN. Love does not come like that. I —

(Hesitates meaningly.)

DEERING. I see. You don't think I am fit —

HELEN. It is sufficient that I say I do not care to be your wife.

DEERING. It was not so long ago—not many weeks, or days—since you seemed rather inclined to consider the transaction. Perhaps you have met the

man whom you can "regard"—I think I understand.

HELEN. I cannot help what you think. There is no more to be said. (*Starts R., about to go out.*)

DEERING. You may change your mind—a woman does sometimes, you know. If so—you may find the—the proposition—still open.

HELEN. No. Please—you will excuse me. (*She turns from him, rings bell, then goes up R. After slight pause, enter HENSON, L. U. E.*) The gentleman's hat and coat, please, Henson.

(*She bows coolly, and exits R. DEERING stands looking after her, resentment, then anger, with a mean, vindictive expression dawning upon his face. Then he smiles derisively, stops, listens, and goes and looks off L. 2 E.; stands looking off, with growing interest. HENSON has gone out L. U. E., now returns with DEERING's hat and coat; stands up L., waiting.*)

DEERING. Look. Who is that in there?

HENSON (*coming down, looking off L.*). You mean, sir——

DEERING. There—the young man—talking to Miss Newcomb and the others.

HENSON. That, sir? Why, that's Mr. Richard.

DEERING. You mean Mrs. Brewster's son—Miss Helen's brother?

HENSON. Why, yes, sir.

DEERING. I—see. That will do. Thank you. You—needn't wait.

HENSON. Very well, sir.

(*Exit HENSON, R. DEERING is still looking off L., with renewed interest, which becomes repressed excitement, with something of exultation. He pauses a moment, then, with a gloating smile, goes up and takes up telephone receiver.*)

DEERING. Hello—hello! Give me Police Headquarters. Yes, the Bureau of Police. The Chief of

Police. At once, please. (*Waits feverishly; there is an appreciable pause, then he speaks again, with tones that thrill with tense impatience.*) Yes—yes. Is this Police Headquarters? Yes, the Chief—it is most important. (*There is another pause, during which, holding the receiver to his ear, DEERING glances towards L. with a look of vengeful triumph.*) Hello! Is this the Chief of Police? All right. (*Sufficient pause between speeches.*) Never mind who this is. You are looking for the man who killed Miss Navarre—Lora Navarre, the actress—about two weeks ago? Well, his name is Brewster—Richard Brewster. You will find him at his home, 176 Ellington Avenue. Yes, Ellington—176. He is there now. But lose no time—send at once—or it will be too late.

(*He hangs up receiver, takes coat and hat, glances once more towards L. 2 E., with a smile of wicked satisfaction, tosses his head slightly, knowingly, and exits quickly, L. U. E.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*Parlor of a small apartment, up-town, New York; well, but not elaborately furnished. There is a door R., leading to a small entry, with another door, beyond, to hall; door, or narrow archway L., with thick draperies, parted in centre. Telephone, etc. Discover DICK BREWSTER seated C.; he is ghastly pale, looking exhausted, his head drooping, eyes nearly closed, hands hanging limply over sides of chair. He has just been put through the "third degree" and is almost a mental and physical wreck. He is muttering, in a final gasp of denial to the demands that he "confess."* HENRY MARKHAM, the detective, stands at his left, looking sternly down at him; HIGGINS, an officer, in uniform, R. C., somewhat back.

DICK (*shaking head slowly and speaking in wavering tones*). No—no—I didn't—I didn't do it——

MARKHAM (*sternly, seizing his shoulder, shaking him roughly*). Come now, stop that faking. You've got life enough in you, if you wanted to show it. You can't fool me. The sooner you make a clean breast of this thing, the better it'll be for you.

DICK. No, no—I can't——

MARKHAM. You stood behind those curtains and fired the shot that killed that woman—the woman that threw you over—and we can prove it. If you own up to it, and tell us all about it, so we know what your provocation was,—why, then you'll get some mercy. But if you don't——

(DICK still shakes his head, weakly, murmuring a refusal.)

OFFICER HIGGINS. Plucky little guy, ain't he, boss? Don't look as if you'd——

ALIAS MISS SHERLOCK

(*The door-bell rings, R.*)

MARKHAM. That'll do for you—no remarks from the gallery. See who that is, and whoever 'tis, tell 'em they can't come in.

(*Enter, L., DELPHINE, the French maid. Without looking to right or left, she goes to R. to open door, but HIGGINS is ahead of her. He opens door, goes into entry. DELPHINE goes back to L., exits, but stands behind curtains, peering through, listening. MARKHAM sees her, glances in her direction and she disappears, pulling curtains together. HIGGINS enters R., cautiously holding door slightly open.*)

HIGGINS. It's that young lawyer-feller—Fillmore——
MARKHAM. D' know what right he has here. Tell him he can't come in.

(*HIGGINS is about to go out R. when the door is pushed open and LEONARD enters, thrusting him aside. He is followed by SARAH, who at once sees DICK and goes to him, kneeling by his side, in spite of MARKHAM, who is too surprised to prevent her.*)

SARAH. Dick—oh, Dick, what have they been doing to you? Dick, I am here—your Aunt Sarah. Look at me, Dick. Dick!

(*DICK falls over, lifelessly, into her arms; she fondles him.*)

MARKHAM. What's all this? Where did this woman come from? She has no right here—nor you, either. (*Addressing LEONARD.*)

LEONARD. I d' know. No law against coming in, I guess, seeing we rang the bell and somebody opened the door. Anyhow, we're here.

MARKHAM. So I see, and I'd like to know what it means. How'd you find out? It wasn't given out, down to Headquarters, I reckon?

LEONARD. I found out, though, it seems. I heard

you were going to put this boy through your villainous "third degree," and I would have managed to prevent it, some way, if I'd known it in time ———

MARKHAM. Oh, you would? Think you've got a lot of influence, don't you? Well, maybe you have, back in that jay-burg where you come from. But I guess you can't very well upset the whole New York Police Department and the Detective Force. We haven't got through with this young fellow yet, and you won't find it wise to interfere.

SARAH (*placing DICK's head against back of chair and springing up, facing MARKHAM boldly*). Well, I'll interfere! I won't let you torture this poor boy any more. Look at him—what shape he's in. It's wicked—shameful—— How can you do it? It's cruel, it isn't fair!

MARKHAM. Excuse *me*, Madam, but I guess we know our business and what's right and fair, without any advice from anybody. We brought this young fellow here, where he committed that crime, to make him confess—and if he knows what's best for him, he'll do it.

SARAH. Confess! Confess—to something he never did? No, never—he shan't do that. You can't make him do it ———

LEONARD. I wouldn't interfere, Miss Newcomb, if I were you. (*To MARKHAM.*) I don't believe you want to do anything unjust—m'm—inadvisable, I mean. You must see that my client is in no condition to stand any more. It looks like you'd put him through a pretty severe ordeal already. Give the poor boy a chance.

MARKHAM. Huh!—yes, he had a chance, all right—a chance to skip, with your help, it seems, if we hadn't had a tip and been a little too quick for you. We got there just in time, it seems, to catch the bird almost on the wing. What kind o' business you call that—for a "lawyer"—helpin' a murderer to escape?

LEONARD. We believe the boy to be innocent. I am

his attorney—I wanted time to look up evidence—to prepare a defense.

MARKHAM. To get him away, you mean—because you know there ain't a chance for him. Well, you see—you didn't do it. (*Seizes hold of DICK, trying to make him rise.*) Come—come along,—you needn't try any more o' that pretendin'. I know all about that —

SARAH. What—what are you going to do with him?

MARKHAM. Going to finish our job, of course. You don't think we ever give up, do you? Guess not. We got jest a little more to say to this chap, just as soon as you'll be so obligin' as to leave. Beg pardon, Madam, f'r seemin' impolite, but business is business and duty's duty —

SARAH. But can't you see he isn't able to stand any more? Look at him—he's nothing but a poor, weak, scared boy —

MARKHAM. I guess I know what he is, all right. You'll have to stand aside, Madam. (*SARAH has sunk down by chair, holding DICK in her arms, as if to shield him. MARKHAM starts to take hold of him. LEONARD, who stands R. C., looks on, as if doubtful just what to do. HIGGINS comes down, stands near MARKHAM, L. C.*) Come—you might as well get up—I got a few things to say to you yet —

LEONARD. See here, Mr. Markham, don't you think you could call it off—for the present?

MARKHAM. I know when it's time to call things off. What I want you t' do is to take this lady and get out. This is serious business, and we're losing time.

LEONARD. Very well; I suppose we must submit. (*Patting DICK on back.*) Brace up, my boy—don't give in. We will have to go now, but we shan't forget you a minute—remember that.

DICK (*reaching up his hand, which LEONARD grasps*). Thanks. I know. I'll—try —

LEONARD (*dropping DICK's hand, taking SARAH by arm, assisting her to rise*). Come, Miss New-

comb, we'll have to go now. I'm sorry, but we'll have to, I guess.

SARAH (*once more appealing to MARKHAM*). Oh, sir, won't you stop trying to make him say what he never means to say—unless you drive him to the point where he doesn't know it? He's not a murderer—that boy. Look at him,—can't you tell he isn't that kind? Promise me, if we go, you'll let him alone, for to-night anyway, and take him back and let him have some sleep. Why, he's all played out—just a wreck.

MARKHAM. I know what t' do, Madam—you leave it to me —

SARAH. I'm not "Madam"—I'm just Miss Newcomb, from the country, where folks have hearts and give them that are in trouble a chance, instead of kicking 'em and grinding 'em down and never givin' 'em a fair show. I'm this boy's aunt—his mother's sister—and I love him as much as his own mother ever did—I guess more—and I want to help him. Won't you do what I ask—let him —

MARKHAM. Excuse *me*, 'tain't no use your talking, Madam—or "Miss"—because I've got orders and I'm going to carry 'em out. We came here for a purpose and we're going to stick to it; so the sooner you get out of the way, the better it'll be for all concerned.

SARAH (*standing over DICK, her hand on his shoulder*). Then you'll have to carry me away, for I'm here and I won't budge a step —

LEONARD. Miss Newcomb —

MARKHAM. See here, ma'am, this won't do. It's all foolishness, us losing time this way. You step aside and let us do our duty.

SARAH. Is it your "duty" to crush the very life out of this poor boy? Well, then it's my duty to stand between him and you and protect him, and I mean to do it as long as there's a mite of strength left in my body.

MARKHAM (*seizing hold of her arm*). See here—I've

had enough of this. Either you step aside, or I'll place you under arrest.

LEONARD. Mr. Markham!

MARKHAM. That's what I said. What do you think I am? She's interfering with the law —

(SARAH wrenches herself free from his grasp, facing him defiantly; for a moment he seems too taken aback to interrupt her.)

SARAH. You talk about the law, that the likes of you are chosen to enforce—you—you who are not men, but great, ravenous beasts, looking for something to tear to pieces and devour. You want a victim. What do you care if it is a poor, weak boy, who hasn't the strength to defend himself? It's all the better for you, all the easier! It's somebody for you to shake and choke and grind under your heel, till they haven't life enough left to do anything but give up. What if he is innocent—you don't think of that,—all you want is to show that you represent the "law"—to hold your jobs and prove what great detectives you are —

MARKHAM. Madam—you'd better —

(He approaches her, menacingly; LEONARD also makes an attempt to silence her, but she thrusts them both aside, still assailing MARKHAM.)

SARAH. "Law"! Don't you know there's a law of pity and mercy and justice, as well as one of might and terror—the kind that puts folks behind prison bars and hangs 'em—maybe for something they never did? Is it "justice" to try to prove a person committed a crime, and never try to prove they didn't? Why don't you look for something that might help this poor boy, instead of saying he's guilty and letting it go at that? "Proofs"—you say you have proofs—but you don't mean to let him prove that you're wrong. You don't want him to—you're afraid he will,—even if you saw a chance to save him, you wouldn't take it, 'cause

then you'd have to go to work all over again. All you want is a victim—some one to hang. Well, you shan't have my boy—you shan't—you shan't!

(*She finally gives up, partly exhausted; again sinks down on floor by DICK, shielding him, still looking up at MARKHAM defiantly, though with wavering strength. He has stood looking at her, at first angrily, then dumbfounded, finally with a half good-natured expression. He now shakes his head, murmurs.*)

MARKHAM. Well, I'll be ——

LEONARD (*to MARKHAM, in a conciliatory tone*). She'll be all right, Mr. Markham, if you'll just let me ——

MARKHAM. Oh,—all right; go ahead. I guess we won't bother any more to-day.

LEONARD. You mean you'll call it off ——?

MARKHAM. Yes, I guess so—for the present.

LEONARD (*to SARAH, helping her to rise*). Miss Newcomb—it will be all right now. Mr. Markham says they won't carry it any further to-day.

SARAH (*in a sort of daze—to MARKHAM*). You mean—you'll let him rest—sleep?

MARKHAM. Yes, I guess we can fix it. It's getting late, and—see here, Higgins, we'll take him back now and postpone this business till to-morrow ——

(*MARKHAM and officer are R. C., somewhat back; LEONARD, R.; SARAH and DICK, C., she with arm about him.*)

SARAH. Do you hear, Dick? They're going to let you have some rest now. It'll be all right. You try to be brave, and don't forget I'm not giving up for a minute.

DICK (*with a show of better courage*). I will, Aunt Sarah. I'm going to brace up and make the best of it. I didn't mean to give way like that, but I couldn't help it—they drove me to it ——

SARAH. I know, Dick, boy,—I know. Come now, you'll have to go; but keep up your courage and we'll save you yet, you see if we don't.

(She leads him up; he goes with the officer, with an attempt at braveness, smiling faintly at SARAH, as she kisses him, with a pat on the shoulder. The officer takes him out R., followed by MARKHAM, who shakes his head slightly, as if it were all too much for him. LEONARD lingers.)

LEONARD. Well—I must say!

SARAH. No you mustn't. You needn't say a word. I know what you think, but I ain't crazy, and I wouldn't care if I was—I got the best of that detective and gave him a piece of my mind that I hope he won't forget —

LEONARD. Well, I should say you did—a pretty generous piece. But I'm afraid you have a wrong idea as to what you did to him.

SARAH. But I made him give up. You think he'll keep his word, don't you?

LEONARD. Oh, yes, so far as that goes. But I don't see as we've gained much, except a brief respite for Dick. Of course, that's something—but we might as well face the facts. We haven't found a clue yet—not a thing to refute their evidence. Not even who gave them that tip which upset all our plans. That certainly was a blow.

SARAH. Yes. I almost gave up for a while. It certainly is a mystery. Somebody knows—somebody who has an object in causing Dick's arrest. But who—who —?

LEONARD. He declares nobody knew his name but Miss Navarre—nobody else saw him there except those two—the man and this French maid, Del—what-ever-her-name-is.

SARAH. Then it was one of them that notified the police. But how did they know? You haven't found out who the man was?

LEONARD. No. There seems to have been a lot of them.

SARAH. My, she must have been one of them "vampire" things it tells about in some of those detective stories—the kind they have in the movies. Poor thing, maybe her fate was no more than she deserved. But to say that Dick — Len, something's got to be done. For one thing, I'm going to stay here and talk to that French woman. I may be able to get something out of her.

LEONARD. I doubt it. She seems to have told all she knows. The police say her story hangs together. No, we can't get away from it—everything points to young Brewster.

SARAH. But points wrong—I know it. There's something strange about all this. I mean, something we haven't even got an inkling of yet. Len, I want you to go away and leave me. I want to look around a little—and talk to that woman.

LEONARD. I don't see the use. The police have examined everything here. So have I.

SARAH. Yes, I know; the police have, and you have—but I haven't. I may think I'm too smart, Len, but it won't do any hurt for me to try. Something's got to be done. We are right up against that blank wall, and I'm going to make a desperate effort to find a loose stone in it. There must be a hole in it somewhere, if it's only a chink—and I shan't give up till I see at least a speck of light shinin' through.

LEONARD. Well, I suppose, being a woman, you'll have to have your own way.

SARAH. You ought to know that, by this time. So I want you to go and leave me here for a while.

LEONARD. M'm—I don't know about that—not so sure it would be safe —

SARAH. Pshaw! I guess I can take care of myself. Of course, you can wait down-stairs for me, if you want to. You might come up—say in fifteen minutes or so, and see if I'm still alive—or need any help.

LEONARD. Well, I suppose—if you say so —

SARAH. I do. So supposing you vanish. I want a

chance to look around and take things in. There may be a clue here somewhere, just waitin' for me to pick it up, and maybe I can beat the great Markham at his own game. 'T any rate, I'll feel better satisfied to try.

LEONARD (*at door, R.*). Very well. There's the telephone. I'll be down in the office. If you need me, 'phone down, and I'll come right up. Otherwise, I'll wait fifteen minutes —

SARAH. Or twenty. You needn't be in such an awful hurry.

LEONARD. Oh, all right—take your time. Only remember—there's the telephone—and be careful —

SARAH. Oh, go on. I know what to do. (*Exit LEONARD, R. SARAH goes and closes door after him; stands for a moment, knob in hand, looking about; then comes to C., stands gazing around, to R., to L., up, down; goes about, examining everything closely. She does not appear to notice the curtains across door L., but, gradually working her way in that direction, suddenly flings them apart, disclosing DELPHINE, who has been watching her.*) Come right in. I was just goin' to call you.

DELPHINE (*entering, a bit confused, but still self-possessed*). Oui, Madame, I—I was about to enquire if I could be of assistance —

SARAH. That's very kind of you. Seem real anxious, don't y'?

DELPHINE. Anx-i-ous? Oh, oui—certainment, Madame —

SARAH. You've got it a little different from the rest of 'em, haven't you? I suppose that's French—"M'-dam"—meaning the same as just plain "Madam" in New York language. Well, I ain't either of 'em. I'm just Miss—plain "Miss Newcomb."

DELPHINE. I see—Ma-dam-oiselle —

SARAH. M'—"dam"—"sell"? Land, sounds like swearin', don't it? I always heard you French

women wa'n't very partic'lar how you talked.
Come all the way from France, did you?

DELPHINE. Oh, oui—a ver' long time ago. Since I am quite petite.

SARAH. So? Must feel quite at home here by this time. Kind o' strange you still jabber French-talk. Seems so you might know all "United States" by this time.

DELPHINE. Oh,—but always I am of my own language so fond. I do not so much seek to speak the Anglaise.

SARAH. I see—"to memory dear," as the old song says. Well, anyway, supposing we sit down for a while and have a little talk. I'd kind o' like to ask you a few things, if you don't mind.

DELPHINE. So—certainment—if Madame wish. But I will stand. To sit also, with Madame, would not be—what you say?—"the thing"—so?

SARAH. I suppose maybe it wouldn't, if that's the way you look at it. Still working here, are you?

DELPHINE. I stay—for a time. Ah, my poor mistress—Mademoiselle Navarre! (*Wiping her eyes, appearing grief-stricken.*) Par-don, but it is so terreeble—such "shock," as you say. I have not yet of myself the control. She was so kind—I am of her so fond——

SARAH. How long had you worked for her?

DELPHINE. Oh, not for so long a time. T'ree month—maybe four—I am with her; I cannot now just remember. Almost she treat me as a friend, my poor, poor mistress, who have been so cruelly murdered by that—Mistaire Brewstaire——

SARAH. Stop—don't say that. He's my nephew—and no murderer. Oh, I know, they say he is—you may think he did it—but I don't, and all the detectives in New York and the whole police department to boot, couldn't make me believe it.

DELPHINE. I beg of Madame the par-don. I mean not to offend—but—it is so plain—there can be no doubt. What I see, I see; what I know, I know.

SARAH. Well—sometimes folks think they see more'n they do, and don't know quite so much as they think they do. (*Rising, looking about.*) Do you mind sort of pointing out just what you did see—what happened here, that day that your mistress was—killed? You didn't see it done, did you?

DELPHINE. Ah, but, yes—almost it was the same. I heard—I saw—her, poor Miss Navarre, lying—there,—oh, so cruelly murdered—lying in a little pool of—of blood—*her* blood! And then—then—— (*She pauses, shuddering.*)

SARAH. But ain't you getting a little ahead of your story? First you say you "heard." Heard what—a pistol go off?

DELPHINE. Go—off? Oh, oui—it make the bang—noise—so,—just as I come up in the elevator and get off here, at this floor——

SARAH. So you didn't come on home with Miss Navarre that day?

DELPHINE. No. Seldom I would do that. Always she would have some friend—some zshentleman—who would take her out—to suppaire—escort her home. I am to stay at the theatre—in the dressing-room, to put away her costumes—to arrange everything, you know. I come later—by and by—when I am through. That is how. But seldom it is that I come with her.

SARAH. She had quite a lot of gentleman friends, didn't she?

DELPHINE. Oh,—oui—it was many; she was so populaire. That day, it seems it was the young man—Mr.—Brewstaire—as you say, your, how is it?

SARAH. My nephew.

DELPHINE. Oui. But I did not know him—nevaire would she tell me the names. It is sometimes the one, sometimes it is anothaire. I ask no questions—I know my place.

SARAH. You had never seen my nephew—Mr. Brewster—before that day?

DELPHINE. No, nevaire had I seen him until I enter—after the shot—find my mistress dead—run

here—to this door—put aside these curtains—so,—and there—there stand the young man—your Mr. Brewstaire. His eyes bulge, his face is of the crazy-look, and there—there on the floor—right by him,—I see—the peestol—with which he had just fired the shot that kill my mistress!

(DELPHINE is holding back the curtains, looking within the room, off L. SARAH stands near her, looking at same spot.)

SARAH. The pistol laid—right there.

DELPHINE. Oui. I peek it up.

SARAH. Oh, you picked it up? And looked at it?

DELPHINE. Oh, oui—then I think—it is too horrible —I drop it —

SARAH. In the same spot?

DELPHINE. Oui. In the same spot—right there—you see?

SARAH. Yes, I see. M'm—and in the meantime, what else happened? Where was Dick?

DELPHINE. Ah, but he escape. I am so excite—he go, queek—there—(*points R.*) and disappear. I am at the telephone. When again I look, he is—gone.

SARAH. What about that other man that was here—what became of him?

DELPHINE. Then—why, he also—he is gone —

SARAH. Oh, he skipped too? Where did he go?

DELPHINE. I do not see. When I have call the po-leece, I am alone. Alone with her—my mistress—dead!

SARAH. But it seems that man showed up afterwards. They have his testimony.

DELPHINE. But then it is too late—the murderer, he is gone.

SARAH. Yes, whoever it was—not the one you think. But we won't argue that question now. I want to look around a little. I'll see what this room looks like. (*Exit SARAH, L. DELPHINE holds back curtain, looking in at her. SARAH calls from within.*) Where does this door go to?

DELPHINE. The door? Oh, that door, it lead to the dining-room—then it is the kitchen—"ette," as they say.

(There is a slight pause; DELPHINE drops curtain, comes to C., looking toward L., showing some annoyance—scowls, with a vindictive expression. SARAH enters; holds curtain aside, looking back off L.)

SARAH. There's just that one door. You say it leads into the dining-room—and on into the kitchen.

DELPHINE. Though the kitchen we seldom use. When we have the meals here, it is the caterer that would come in.

SARAH. Oh, that was the way? You never did the cooking?

DELPHINE. I?—*cook*? But no—nevaire! I am not the cook—Mon Dieu—no!

SARAH. I don't see what you're staying here all this time for, anyway. No work for you to do;—not getting any pay, are you?

DELPHINE. But my mistress, already she have paid me—in advance—and the apartment, also for some time it is paid. The poleece, they say I shall stay, for the present, till they have been here sometimes —

SARAH. Yes, and brought that poor boy to torture him. But don't you get lonesome here—feel kind of—m'm—sort of "creepy" like?

DELPHINE. "Creepy"—like? I do not know. It is the strange word—but I need not to creep —

SARAH. Well, never mind. Only I wondered. Now, let me see—couldn't somebody have come in through that door in there, and—done it?

DELPHINE. But it is not posseeble. The door always it is locked.

SARAH. Locked!—that door, between that room and the dining-room? That's funny. Why?

DELPHINE. No—the other door, beyond—the one that opens to the hall—the other entrance. You see? Always that is locked. Nobody could come

in. Besides, Mr. Brewstaire, he was there—in this room—he see nobody. It is he that say so. He was alone—quite—when I come. The door—beyond—I find it still locked.

SARAH (*puzzled—looking about, thinking deeply*). M'm—and—that other man who was here,—the one who skipped out too,—you don't know who he was?

DELPHINE. But no, as I have told Madame. I believe some friend of Miss Navarre who also come that day for the first time here. She know him as so jealous—is afraid,—she tell Mr. Brewstaire to hide—there—and then, when he suspect, they quarrel, perhaps, and then, from there, behind the curtain,—Mr. Brewstaire—wild—jealous, too, of the other one—crazy with the angaire—he —

SARAH. Oh, that's how you figure it out, is it? Well, there may have been somebody in there, crazy and wild with "the angaire,"—but you needn't tell me you have named the right person. I know better —

DELPHINE. Madame!—is it that you would say I do not tell all—that it is not true, what I have said? But it is—what you call?—"corroborate." The poleece—they believe.

SARAH. Of course they do. They'll believe anything that suits their side. You won't catch them trying to make it look any other way.

DELPHINE. But what does Madame think —?

SARAH. I don't think—I know that it wasn't Dick Brewster that shot that woman—no matter if everybody else in the world says he did. But to prove I'm right—that's another thing. You'd like to help me, wouldn't you?

DELPHINE. I? But I cannot. It is not that I would not, but—but what I know, it is. Of course—I sympathize. (*Beginning to tire of the interview.*) Now, if Madame would care to go?

SARAH. Thanks, but I'm in no hurry. Guess I'll stay a while longer. (*Sits L. C.*) But you needn't wait. I know the way out.

DELPHINE (*goes to D. L.*). And if Madame should wish for me—she will call?

SARAH. Yes. But, say, I wish you'd call me "Miss." I hate that "Ma-dam" business.

DELPHINE. Oh, certainment—"Mees."

SARAH. Thanks. That's more like it—just "Miss Newcomb." It makes me feel like a dressmaker, or a woman that tells fortunes or fixes finger-nails, to be called "Madam" all the time. (*She sits in deep thought, seeming not to notice DELPHINE, who is about to exit L. She looks towards door R., and speaks, just as DELPHINE parts curtains L. and is about to exit.*) M'm—by the way—that door, there—— (*Pointing to R.*) There's another one, and a little entry between, isn't there?

DELPHINE (*coming part way back, to L. C.*). En—tree? Oh—oui—vestibule.

SARAH. Yes, if that's what you call it. (*She goes R., opens door, looking out.*) That door—the one into the hall—that's kept locked, I suppose?

DELPHINE. Oui—always it is locked. It is the spring-lock.

SARAH. Then it was locked that day—of the—that it happened ——?

DELPHINE. Certainment.

SARAH. But you burst right in, after you heard that shot? Had a key, I suppose?

DELPHINE. Why, of course. Miss Navarre,—I,—both, we have the key.

SARAH. The same one?

DELPHINE. No, no,—each we have one.

SARAH. Then when you got off the elevator—just as you heard the shot—you unlocked the door and rushed right in? (*DELPHINE makes assent.*) I see. And when you came in, you saw Miss Navarre there—on the floor ——

DELPHINE. Yes, yes;—as I have said. My poor mistress!

SARAH. "Yes, yes"? You mean "oui, oui," don't y'? Well, anyway—you rushed right across this

room and pulled aside those curtains —— How did you know there was anybody behind 'em?

DELPHINE. But I have heard the shot—I look—I see a hand—a face—there, in the curtains. I look—it is he ——

SARAH. M'm—it didn't take you long to unlock the door and get in, after you got off the elevator, did it? Had the key all ready, I suppose?

DELPHINE. Why, of course. It is so easy—it take but a second ——

SARAH. Of course. That's just one of my foolish questions. But I'd like to see the key.

DELPHINE. The key? It is nothing—just a key.

SARAH. I know. But I'm sort o' curious. Just like to look at it, if it ain't too much trouble.

DELPHINE. It is strange,—but of course —— It is in my bag. I will get it.

(Exit DELPHINE L. SARAH has closed door R.; comes to C., stands, squinting her eyes, with a keen, suspicious look, after DELPHINE—seems to be “putting two and two together.” After slight pause, enter DELPHINE L.)

SARAH. That it?

DELPHINE *(indicating Yale key—one of two, tied together)*. This ——

SARAH *(taking keys, examining one indicated)*. Yes, and—er—what's this other one?

DELPHINE. The other one? Oh—why, it is that we have two.

SARAH. Sure. Of course. So if you should lose one.

DELPHINE. As one might—so easily—you see?

SARAH. Sure—easy as anything. I've lost things myself, lots of times—keys, too. But it seems kind o' funny to have 'em tied together like this. If you lose one, you lose both. Then how'd you get in?

(She has placed one key on top of the other, comparing and examining them closely, feeling of nicks in them.)

DELPHINE. It is not that I keep them so. I have just tie them—since ——

SARAH. Oh—I see. Of course,—now you've got the other one—the one that—*she*—had?

DELPHINE (*somewhat relieved*). Oui.

SARAH. Why, of course; if you lose these, you have that one now. All very plain. You say these are both to that door. (*Indicating door R.*)

DELPHINE. Oui—both.

(*She holds out her hand to take keys; SARAH is about to give them to her, when the door-bell rings, R., and she keeps them.*)

SARAH. There—that's Len Fillmore. He said he'd come up after me. (*Starts to door.*)

DELPHINE. I ——

(*Is about to open door R., but SARAH intercepts her.*)

SARAH. Never mind. I'll let him in.

DELPHINE. But, Madame—pardon—it is my place ——

SARAH. Land, I guess I've been to doors! (*She is too quick for DELPHINE, opens door and quickly goes out, pulling door shut behind her. DELPHINE seems annoyed; after pause, opens door cautiously, peering out. SARAH outside.*) All right, Len; go right in.

(*DELPHINE closes door, quickly goes to C., just as LEONARD enters R.*)

LEONARD. Oh, you're here, are you, Del—"peen"?

DELPHINE. Del—"phine," Monsieur.

LEONARD. Oh, yes—"phine." New one on me. French, isn't it?

DELPHINE. Oh,—oui.

LEONARD. Nice name all right. Suits you.

DELPHINE. Merci.

LEONARD. Mercy? Oh, yes, that means "much obliged." You're welcome. Nice name—nice

girl. You were Miss Navarre's maid, I understand?

DELPHINE. Oui; I am her maid.

LEONARD. Am? Oh, I see—that's your way of saying "was." Sort of a hired girl you were, I suppose?

DELPHINE. I know not that—"hired girl." If it is the servant that you mean—*non!*

LEONARD. Well, you're a girl, and you got paid—guess it's about the same thing. But I suppose you didn't do much housework?

DELPHINE. Monsieur would "joke" with me. I beg to be excuse. (*About to exit L.*)

LEONARD. Pshaw, you needn't get mad about it. You and Miss Newcomb been having quite a chat here, haven't you?

DELPHINE. Oh, indeed—much. It is that she is so—inquisi-teev.

LEONARD. You mustn't mind her. She means all right. (*Looking R.*) I wonder if she's got lost. Guess I'd better look.

DELPHINE (*at door R.*). I will see.

(*She is about to open door when SARAH enters.*)

SARAH. Ready, Len?

LEONARD. Well, I should say. You?

SARAH. Yes, all ready—now. Guess you think it's about time. (*Looking about, in search of something—in bag, then on floor.*) I declare, I've lost my handkerchief. Must have dropped it. (*To DELPHINE.*) Maybe it's in that room there. Would you mind looking?

DELPHINE. Non. Certainment.

(*Exit DELPHINE L.; the curtains are closed.*)

SARAH (*glancing L., then going and looking through curtains; closing them, coming back, speaking cautiously to LEONARD*). Len ——

LEONARD. Yes ——?

SARAH. Sh! (*Glancing L.*) You know that stone wall?

LEONARD. The blank one? Yes.

SARAH. Well,—there is a chink in it—a hole ——

LEONARD. A ——

SARAH. And it's a—"key"-hole. (*Going R., about to exit; he follows her, curiously.*) Yes, Len, a keyhole. And I think I've got the key—that—fits it!

(*Exit SARAH D. R.; LEONARD, at door, holding it part way open, looks out after her, with wrinkled brows; then smiles indulgently. Exit LEONARD R. At same instant, enter DELPHINE L.*)

DELPHINE. I did not find —— (*She looks surprised—puzzled—hastens to D. R., just as LEONARD closes it behind him. She opens it—calls.*) Madame!—the—key!

(*The outer door is heard to slam. DELPHINE stands with knob of inner door in her hand, looking out. A perplexed expression, then one of apprehension—fright—dawns upon her face.*)

CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE.—*The same as ACT II, about three weeks later. Discover AARON FLINT, standing up by L. U. E., with cheap suitcase in one hand, a rolled-up umbrella in the other; his hat on, pushed back. LILY ANN is part way down c. She wears hat, coat, etc., has hand-bag and a good-sized package of brown paper, well tied with string. They are both looking at HENSON, who is posed in L. U. E., in his most pompous attitude.*

AARON. Wal, I guess you can tell Miss Newcomb we're here, can't y'? Should think you might do that much t' oblige. She's stayin' here, ain't she? (*HENSON gives a stiff bow, in assent.*) Wal, then, can't y' go 'n' tell her —

LILY ANN. Aaron, you keep still—and take y'r hat off. Where's your manners? (*AARON removes hat, sheepishly, murmuring, "Oh!"*) I s'posed, seein' you let us in, that mebbe you worked here, but if I've made a mistake, I beg your pardon —

HENSON. I am the butler —

AARON. Any relation to Sam Butler, up in Warren County?

LILY ANN. Land, Aaron Flint, ain't you got a bit o' sense? He means he's a waiter —

AARON. Oh, that's it? Then mebbe he's wait'n' for a tip. (*Feeling in pockets; HENSON shows offended dignity.*) That's the way they all be, down this way. Won't budge an inch, 'nless y' tip 'em.

HENSON. If you will present me with your cards —

(*He has card-tray, which he now holds out. AARON places a coin on it. HENSON pays no attention to this, though assuming an even more pompous manner.*)

LILY ANN. Land, we ain't got no cards. We ain't that stylish. I guess it'll be all right if you just go and tell her some friends of hers are here.

HENSON. What name, please?

LILY ANN. Newcomb—Sarah Newcomb.

HENSON. Pardon me—the names I am to announce.

LILY ANN. Oh—you mean our names. Never mind, jest tell her what I said—some friends of hers. We want to s'prise her.

(HENSON turns, and, in a most dignified manner, goes up-stairs.)

AARON (going to foot of stairs, looking up after him).

Wal, I'll be gum-swizzled, if he ain't the darndest! Thought mebbe 'twas the King of Egypt 'r somebuddy here makin' 'em a visit.

LILY ANN. Yes, of course you had t' go and show your greenness. Land, I should think you'd know what a "butler" is, after all them story books you've read. It's only another name for hired man, same as you.

AARON. Me? Like that? Gosh! strangle me! Seems t' me you didn't know much more about it 'n' I did, though, when it comes t' that. Guess if I'm green, you're a pretty good match f'r me. (They have come part way down; AARON has placed grip, etc., at one side. Both go about, examining furniture, pictures, etc.) Got it fixed up pretty swell here, ain't they? Guess this is what y'd call style.

LILY ANN. Yes—the kind o' style Mis' Brewster 'n' her daughter keep up, 'n' then come 'n' live on Miss Newcomb all summer. I guess if the truth was known, she's putt'n' up for some o' this too—though she never lets on. I know her. 'Tis pretty grand, though. Ain't nothin' in Brookville like it—even at the hotel.

AARON. D' know's we'll know how t' act ——

LILY ANN. Huh! They can't scare me with their hifalutin things and stuck-up ways. I'm as good as they are, when it comes to that—and you

needn't go to apologizin', Aaron Flint. Hold y'r head up, and act as if you was good as anybuddy.

AARON. Gosh! I never could act 's if I was such a big-bug as that butler feller——

LILY ANN. The idea—him! Sh! Here she comes.

(SARAH appears at top of stairs. They see her and draw back to one side, so that she does not see them, as she comes down, enters and to c. They then approach her, one on each side. HENSON comes down-stairs; exits R. SARAH turns, sees them—in utter bewilderment, almost unable to speak.)

SARAH. Why—if it isn't—it can't be ——

LILY ANN. But it is, Miss Newcomb—it's us. We've found y', at last. Thought we never would. Talk about your needle in a woodpile——

AARON. Guess we wouldn't yet, 'f 't hadn't be'n f'r my detectative instinc'.

SARAH. But I don't understand—I can't believe it. You, Lily Ann—and Aaron—way down here in New York—and together! What does it mean?

AARON. Oh, we just thought we'd take a little trip.

LILY ANN. Thought mebbe you'd be glad to see us.

SARAH. Why,—I am—of course—but—it don't seem respectable. What'll folks say? Do they know about it, there in Brookville?

AARON. Sure. Regular crowd there, t' see us off.

SARAH. Lily Ann—what does it mean? Are you crazy?

LILY ANN. I d' know but I am, Miss Newcomb. I guess you'll think so, when I tell y'. The truth is—we're married.

SARAH. Married! You—and—Aaron Flint?

LILY ANN. Good land, you don't suppose I'd be takin' a trip with him, t' New York, if I wa'n't? You know me better 'n that, Miss Newcomb. We've been married—three days, ain't it, Aaron? Seems more like three weeks—'r months—t' me.

AARON. Oh, it does, does it? Much obliged.

SARAH. But how 'd it ever happen? After the way

you always vowed, Lily Ann. But, I declare, I'm so upset I forgot to be polite. Set down, Lily Ann—and you, too, Aaron. Land sakes, Lily Ann, I suppose I ought to call you “Mrs. Flint.”

LILY ANN. Mercy me, don't you do it. I wouldn't know the answer. Lily Ann I was, Lily Ann I am, and Lily Ann I always will be.

SARAH. I guess you will be, to me, anyway. But tell me —

LILY ANN. Oh,—well, Aaron he kept pesterin' me till I couldn't stand it any longer, so all of a sudden I up 'n' said yes. Had t' do it t' get red of him. Made up m' mind it 'd be easier t' handle a husban' than a feller 't wanted t' be. B'sides, th' 'nducements was too much for me. I couldn't hold out any longer when he said we'd come t' New York 'n' see you—'n' all the sights.

AARON. I'd be'n savin' up f'r a consid'able spell, with this 'ere trip in view—'n' when I set my mind to a thing—wal, I mos' gen'ally git it.

SARAH. I must say I admire your perseverance, Aaron. 'N' I'm glad you took him, Lily Ann. Only I hope it don't mean you're goin' t' desert me —

LILY ANN. No, indeed, Miss Newcomb, not much. I cal'late we'll stick closer 'n ever. Jest run away for a little wedd'n' tower, so t' speak. Sile Bennett and Fidelia are lookin' after things 't the farm—we attended t' that all right. We're jest takin' a week.

AARON. Yes, 'n' crowdin' a heap int' it, you bet. Be'n stoppin' at the Astor House —

LILY ANN. Sounds real flowery, don't it? 'Tis, too, —'n' expensive.

AARON. 'Propriate, too, for a newly married bridal couple. He “aster,” and she said she would —

LILY ANN. Aaron Flint, don't try t' be smart. Land sakes, Miss Newcomb, I have my hands full with him. Honest, I didn't know anybuddy could be so green —

SARAH. Why, Lily Ann —

LILY ANN. Well, he is. The man at the hotel told us a good show t' go to would be the "Hippo"-drome, and Aaron, he says, "Is that where they have trained 'hippo'-potumuses?" As if they could!

AARON. I guess you needn't talk. When a policeman told us that tall, slim building was the Flatiron Building, Lily Ann, she says, right out—"Oh, le's go in 'n' see 'em make some flatirons!"

LILY ANN. I was jest jokin'. I guess that wa'n't no worse'n you tryin' t' blow out th' 'lectric light ——

AARON. Say—that'll do! Don't you believe her, Miss Newcomb. I guess I ain't sech an old hay-seed 's all that. 'Twa'n't me, 't any rate, when we was up in Central Park, 'n' they p'inted out that big statute they call Cleopatra's Needle, 't said, "Needle? What do they call it a needle for—they ain't no eye-hole to it."

(They begin to show signs of a real "tiff." SARAH tries to pacify them.)

SARAH. When it comes to that, I guess we ain't no greener 'n the city folks are in the country. Remember that girl from New York that boarded with Mis' Orcutt last summer—'t wanted t' know which cow it was 't give butter milk ——

AARON. Gosh! I remember her. She jes' thought it was cute t' pertend she didn't know nothin'.

LILY ANN. Well, they's plenty of 'em 't don't have t' "pertend." But my goodness, Miss Newcomb, we ain't asked y' how you are, and—about that boy, your nephew—'n' all. How's it comin' out?

SARAH. We're hoping for the best, Lily Ann. I'll tell you all about it, later on. You must be tired now, and want to get brushed up a little. I'll see about a room ——

LILY ANN. Oh, you needn't bother, Miss Newcomb. It might put you out some—b'sides, what 'd Mis' Brewster think?

SARAH. Oh, I can fix that all right. You leave it to me.

(*She starts up C., as if to show them up-stairs.* LILY ANN *pauses C.; AARON is L. C.*)

LILY ANN. Well, we might stay one night. Looks real stylish here, don't it? But I s'pose you're gett'n' used to it?

SARAH. No, I can't say I am. I can't hardly wait to get back to the farm. But, come on, and we'll see where you can sleep. I guess in the room right next to mine.

LILY ANN. Oh, that'll be fine. Aaron, where's that bundle?

AARON (*taking package from chair, where she had placed it*). Here 'tis, dearie!

LILY ANN (*sniffing, at his display of sentiment. Takes package*). Here's a few things I brought you, Miss Newcomb. Jes' two 'r three o' my fried-cakes, a little bottle of that preserved water-melon rine you're so fond of—'n' two or three other little things——

SARAH (*taking package*). Oh, Lily Ann—how good of you! My, but they'll taste good. I'm so tired of their fancy cookin' here—and some of your fried-cakes!

LILY ANN. Of course, they may be a little dry——

AARON. 'N' I got a dozen or so o' red apples for Len Fillmore in m' grip—thought he might want t' treat Miss Brewster. Is he still shinin' up to her?

LILY ANN. Aaron Flint—as if she'd have him! Not but what he's too good for her. And how is Len, Miss Newcomb?

SARAH. Oh, he's well. 'Bout played out, though, with the struggle to save my boy. But we'll do it—we will. I'd better show you your room now.

(*She is about to lead the way up-stairs, when HELEN enters R. She sees them—shows surprise.*)

HELEN. Why, if it isn't——

SARAH. Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Flint!

HELEN. What! married—you two?

AARON. Sure. Ain't two enough?

LILY ANN. Don't mind him, Miss Brewster. He ain't responsible. Yes, we're married and on our trip. Jest called to see Miss Newcomb and she's kind enough t' want us t' stay all night—if it won't put you out——

HELEN (*with a display of cordiality, shaking hands with them*). Why, no, of course it won't. We have plenty of room. Please accept my congratulations.

LILY ANN. Thank you.

AARON. And wishin' you the same ——

SARAH. I was just going to take 'em up-stairs, Helen. I thought I'd put 'em in the room next to mine. I guess it'll be all right, won't it?

HELEN. Of course it will. But I'll call Henson.

(*Presses button.*)

AARON. Huh! I guess he ain't much stuck on waitin' on us, if we be a newly married bridal couple on our wedd'n' tower. (HELEN *smiles good-naturedly*. LILY ANN *frowns at AARON, with an admonishing shake of her head.*) Oh, well, that's what we be, 'n' I ain't ashamed of it. By the way, we brung you something, Miss Brewster.

HELEN. Something for me?

AARON. Yep. Right from the farm. Some o' them red apples. Leastwise, I brung Len Fillmore some, 'n' I reckon he'll be willin' t' diyide with y'.

(HELEN *looks somewhat confused*. Enter HENSON R.)

HELEN. Henson, show Mr. and Mrs. Flint to the room next to Miss Newcomb's.

(AARON *has taken up grip, but now yields it to HENSON, who handles it with extreme caution, as if fearing contamination.*)

AARON. Y' needn't be afraid of it, Mister Butler. It won't bite. (HENSON, *in his stiffest manner, goes up the stairs, carrying the suitcase*. AARON *takes the umbrella, package, etc.* He and LILY ANN

are following HENSON up-stairs, she preceding him. Part way up, AARON turns and speaks.)
Hope you'll like the apples, Miss Brewster. Thought mebbe they'd seem like old times—them red ones, y' know.

HELEN. T-thank you. You are very kind —

LILY ANN. Aaron Flint, you come up here. They ain't the same apples at all, Miss Brewster. They're all gone long ago, them summer ones. But these are *red*—and twice as sweet.

AARON (*at top of stairs, as he is about to follow LILY ANN, who has made her exit*). And not half s' apt t' give y' the stummick-ache.

(*Exit AARON. HELEN, paying no attention to his remark, crosses to R. C. SARAH comes down to C.*)

SARAH. You mustn't mind them, Helen. They mean all right. I hope you don't mind their comin'. I was just as much surprised as you were. They never let me know a thing about it.

HELEN. Why should I care? I am glad, if you are pleased to see them.

SARAH. Well, I don't know what Em 'll say.

(HENSON comes down-stairs. Exit R.)

HELEN. She has no right to object. Isn't this practically your house, now? Surely —

SARAH. Helen! You know I don't want you to feel that way. Don't you think, with all we've got to bear, we might be a little closer together—you and me, Helen? I'm your aunt—I want to see you happy—if only —

HELEN. I'm afraid there's not much happiness in store for me, Aunt Sarah. Even if you succeed in saving Dick, as you seem to think you can, you can't save me —

SARAH. Why, Helen, girl, what do you mean? You've given up that man, and now— isn't there another one—some one you really —

HELEN. There is no one else. I have sent for him—to ask his forgiveness for what I said to him. He is coming this afternoon. I am to be—his.

SARAH. But, Helen, you can't marry that man. Even if he still wants you—you mustn't—

HELEN. I can. I must. It is the only way. I have made up my mind.

SARAH. Well, I guess you're woman enough to change it—to make it up all over again. If you knew what that man is—what he has done—

HELEN. It would make no difference.

(She kindly but firmly puts SARAH aside and goes up R. There she meets MRS. BREWSTER, who enters R. U. E. SARAH goes towards MRS. BREWSTER, speaks with vehemence. HELEN pauses.)

SARAH. Em Brewster, what kind of woman are you—what kind of mother? A woman that thinks of nothing but herself—of having a fine house to live in—grand clothes to put on her back and jewelry to hang around her neck and dangle in her ears!—a mother who would sell her own daughter to get those things—sell her to a man who isn't fit to wipe a decent girl's shoes. Is that what you are—my sister? Then I'm ashamed of you—sorry we had the same mother. Look what's come to your son—and now you want to bring your daughter to something worse. He's innocent, while you—you want to make this girl the property of a man who has—who— But you shan't do it—you shan't!

MRS. BREWSTER *(who has stood, apparently too dumb-founded to speak, or as if trying in vain to do so)*. How dare you talk to me like this—how dare you?

SARAH. Dare? Do you think I'm afraid of you—of anything—when it comes to this? No! What I'm afraid of is to trust you with your own child—and I'm going to save her—from you—from her own mother!

(*She has gone up R. and now exits. MRS. BREWSTER and HELEN seem too surprised to speak. MRS. BREWSTER quivering with anger, standing C.; HELEN, who has gone to L. C., overcome with grief and shame, sinks into chair, covering her face with hands.*)

MRS. BREWSTER. I will not put up with it. I shall turn her out of the house, even if she is my sister.

HELEN. Perhaps it is she who can turn us out. Don't forget that.

MRS. BREWSTER. She—with her paltry money! We'll see how far she can go. She shall leave this house?

HELEN. But wait. Soon she may have no further claim upon us.

MRS. BREWSTER. Helen—what do you mean? That you have reconsidered? That it is not too late?

HELEN (*she has risen, stands C.*). It means that I have sent for him—that he is coming back.

MRS. BREWSTER (*as if to caress her, but desisting, as HELEN draws away, coldly*). My daughter!—my own, darling child——

HELEN. No—please. Let there be no false sentiment between us. I am going to sacrifice myself—he is coming to gloat over me—over the woman who, after all, humbles herself at his feet. Let us understand each other, Mother—tell the truth, this once, then I will seal it up in my heart forever and bear it all in silence.

MRS. BREWSTER. Helen—no! If you feel that way about it, I won't let you——

HELEN. Oh, you needn't upbraid yourself. I know what I am doing. It may mean that we can free Dick, too—hide our disgrace. Money can do anything like that. I needn't count. It doesn't matter that I shall be living a lie. I shall not be the first woman that has sold herself—for money—to a man she loathes—when she—loves—another!

MRS. BREWSTER. Helen! You don't mean—you can't—— Not that you love——

(HELEN turns to her, in a sudden, brief surrender to her real feelings.)

HELEN. Yes. Let me own it this once—though not to him. He shall never know. But I love him—I love him! I have, from the first—though I didn't realize it then. He is a "man"—a true, noble man—worthy of my love—of any woman's love. But I—I am not worthy of his!

(She breaks down. MRS. BREWSTER looks at her with some show of compassion, but still evidently rejoicing that she has gained her point.)

MRS. BREWSTER. But—that uncouth countryman —
HELEN (throwing off her real feelings, with a forced air of hardness and indifference, though still with a trace of deeper emotion). We will not speak of it any more—ever again. Remember. But you needn't fear. I shall keep my word. (She is about to go up R., but suddenly pauses.) Oh, by the way, I forgot—we have some guests.

MRS. BREWSTER. Guests?

HELEN. Yes. Whom no doubt you will be overjoyed to see. Old friends of yours—Mr. and Mrs. Flint —

MRS. BREWSTER. F-Flint? You cannot mean —?

HELEN. Aaron and his blushing bride, Lily Ann, from the fair domain of the Newcomb farm in Brookville. They are here on their wedding trip, and have honored us with their presence for a brief sojourn. I must confess I was quite pleased to see them.

MRS. BREWSTER. I shall not submit. How could Sarah presume to invite them here?

HELEN. She didn't. They took her by surprise also. But I shouldn't worry. Doubtless they will be sufficiently entertained, without our assistance. (The door-bell rings; HELEN starts, with a suppressed shudder.) That may be—I cannot see him, just yet. I will be in the library.

(Exit HELEN R. Enter HENSON R., goes out L. U. E. MRS. BREWSTER stands R. C., with an expectant look, denoting triumph. After a pause, HENSON shows in LEONARD FILLMORE. Exit HENSON R.)

MRS. BREWSTER (suddenly assuming a cold, distant manner). Good afternoon, Mr. Fillmore. You will pardon me. I was expecting a gentleman —

(Starts to go up R., disdaining him. He has entered expectantly, with a cordial look, but "wilts," half good-naturedly, at her attitude.)

LEONARD. Oh!—I see. Sorry, if I don't fill the bill.

MRS. BREWSTER (realizing her rudeness, speaking a bit more cordially). Of course, I meant—another gentleman.

LEONARD. Thanks. I feel better. But I called to see Miss Newcomb—if I may.

MRS. BREWSTER. I will have her informed that you are here.

(Exit MRS. BREWSTER R. LEONARD is down R. C., by table; does not notice AARON and LILY ANN, who appear at top of stairs. They have "tidied up," AARON with hair shinily sleeked, etc.; LILY ANN with change to brighter dress or shirtwaist, or with an added gay ribbon or something of the sort. They see LEONARD, steal down close to him, one on either side.)

AARON AND LILY ANN. How d' do?

LEONARD (turns, sees them, almost overcome by surprise). Wh-what? Aaron—Lily Ann——!

AARON. Mr. 'n' Mrs. Aaron Flint, 'f you please.

LEONARD. Never! You don't mean——?

AARON. Sure thing. Ask m' blushing bride.

LILY ANN. Yes, Len—that's us.

LEONARD. Well, I'll be switched! You've put one over on us this time, and no mistake. Shake! (Gives one hand to each; they shake most cordially.) Wonders will never cease. So you gave in at last, Lily Ann?

LILY ANN. Land, Len, I jest had to. They wa'n't no other way, 's I could see, of ever gett'n' t' New York. I jest had to come and see you and Miss Newcomb, 'n' find out everything—if you're goin' t' save that boy, 'n' all. Jest couldn't stand it.

LEONARD. And a little thing like having Aaron, here, for a husband, didn't count.

AARON. She's got me, though, 'n' I'll keep, even after we git back to the farm. Then my part 'll come in.

LILY ANN. I ain't worryin'. Tell me, Len, how are you—what's the prospects—'n' everything?

LEONARD. I can't tell you now; I'm almost too overcome—and so glad to see you—that I can hardly talk. Hope you'll stay long enough for us to give you the best time anybody ever had. But just at present I'm up to my neck in the job of my life. The trial comes off day after to-morrow, and there's a lot to do before then.

LILY ANN. Oh, Len—you going to save him?

LEONARD. Well, I can tell you this much—if I do, it will be owing to Miss Newcomb—to what she has done. That woman's a wonder. What she can't see through and figure out ——

AARON. Detectative instinct—jest like mine.

LILY ANN. Huh! you couldn't detect a clue as big as an elephant, 'nless it bit y'. I ain't s'prised at Miss Newcomb, though—all them mystery stories and sech ——

LEONARD. I'm waiting to see her—it's most important—so, if you don't mind—will you just leave us alone for a few minutes? I'm sorry, but you understand ——

AARON. Sure we do. We'll jest snoop around a little 'n' see what we can see. Come along, sweetie!

LILY ANN (*sniffing at his show of sentiment, as she follows him to L. 2 E.*). All right, Len. Mebbe we'll find the kitchen, so 't I can see what kind o' hired girl they got. I might get a few pointers on real style, so 't when you and your city bride come to Brookville on your wedd'n' trip ——

AARON. Oh, come, Lily-bud. I'll bet he'd ruther have your cookin' any day. Wouldn't y', Len?

LEONARD. You've said it, Aaron——

AARON. But I ain't objectin' t' gitt'n' a sniff o' what we're goin' t' get here for supper. I'm as hungry as seven bears and a woodchuck.

(Exit AARON L. 2 E.)

LILY ANN. So'm I, t' tell the truth. I don't see's bein' married spoils y'r appetite a bit—'ceptin' for bein' married.

(Exit LILY ANN, L. 2 E. LEONARD smiles, turns and meets SARAH, who enters R.)

SARAH. Oh, Len, here you are at last. I've been almost crazy, waitin' for you. Tell me—did you fix it? Will that woman be here?

LEONARD. Yes. I had quite a time, but at last convinced Markham that it was of crucial importance. She has left the apartment, and at first he said we must come to headquarters, where she is detained as a material witness. But finally he consented to bring her here. It looks like things were playing into our hands, at last.

SARAH. Didn't I tell you they would? They're sure to come right in the end.

LEONARD. Well—it's a good thing to hope, anyway. And as for hope—do you think there's any—I mean, do you think——

SARAH. Sure there is, Len. But you've got to fight for that, too. It's her mother. If it wasn't for her——

LEONARD. Why, what has she done—now?

SARAH. I hate to tell you, Len, but the truth is, Helen has sent for that man to come back—to take back what she said to him—to tell him she'll be his.

LEONARD. But how can she—when she knows?

SARAH. You mustn't let her. Assert your rights. She thinks she must sacrifice herself,—but do you mean to stand back and let that man have her?

Huh! I'd grab her up and carry her off by main force, first.

LEONARD. M'm—"Cave-man" stuff. A good idea.

SARAH. Well, I don't know about any cave part, but I guess you're just the man that could do it, once you got y'r spunk up. But tell me—I'm dying to know—how is Dick bearing up?

LEONARD. Like a man. He has new courage—thanks to you. We can't fail now—we mustn't. But I guess it's still up to you, Miss Newcomb. The woman sticks to her story—hasn't budged an inch—the police believe her, and if you can't shake her, I don't know who or what can. She's a pretty slick one.

SARAH. All I want is one more chance at her. What we've found out in the past three weeks may be a little surprise for her, and a few others. It takes a woman to see through a woman—and I began to see through that one in just about two minutes. That French accent didn't sound quite like the real thing to me, little as I know about it. She slipped back into plain "American" without noticin' it, once or twice,—and I noticed what none of you men did—that her eyes don't match that black hair and that that hair has been dyed. And she was a little too ready to explain things—like she'd thought 'em out beforehand. And those two keys! Two keys that fit the same lock don't have different nicks to 'em—my fingers soon told me that. (*The door-bell rings.*) There's the bell again. I guess that's about the busiest little door-bell in New York lately. Henson is earning his wages for once, and I mean to see that he gets 'em. (*Enter HENSON, R.*) Henson, whoever that is, keep 'em out there in the hall, till you let us know who it is. (*Exit HENSON, L. U. E. There is a slight pause; SARAH goes up and looks off L. U. E.*) It's them.

LEONARD. Then I'll vanish, for the present. Now's your chance.

SARAH. Ur-rrr! I sort o' dread it, after all. (*Exit*

LEONARD, L. 2 E. SARAH *is down* R. C., as MARKHAM *enters* L. U. E. *He comes down, looking somewhat puzzled and not altogether pleased.*) Good afternoon, Mr. Markham.

MARKHAM. Well, I've brought the woman. What you going to do about it?

SARAH. Talk to her a few minutes, if you'll let me.

MARKHAM. I don't see what for. That woman's talked and been talked to, till there's nothing more to be said. Don't you suppose we've got everything out of her she's got to tell?

SARAH. All she's got to tell you, maybe—but not all she's *got to tell*, if I can make her tell it.

MARKHAM (*sneering, with a sarcastic laugh*). Queer kind of business, this, anyway, and sort of irregular. But Fillmore told me it was for something that couldn't be done in any other way, and I didn't want to be contrary. I suppose it's all right. It's only fair to give you your chance, I suppose, though I must say I don't see what you think you're going to do.

SARAH. What I'm going to do first, Mr. Markham, is to ask you to leave me alone with her.

MARKHAM. I don't see any objection to that. But of course, I'll have to stick around —

SARAH. I want you to. (*Indicating* L. 2 E.) In that room. I want you to hear every word that is said, and act accordingly.

MARKHAM. That's satisfactory. She's out in the hall, there. I told her to wait. Oh,—Higgins is outside. I told him to trail along and keep his eye peeled. (*Going to* L. 2 E.) In here?

SARAH. Yes. You'll find Mr. Fillmore in there. He understands.

MARKHAM. Well, that's more than I do. But I'll chance it.

(*Exit* MARKHAM, L. 2 E. SARAH *stands a moment, as if to gain courage; then goes and looks off* L. U. E. *She makes a slight motion.* HENSON *appears in* L. U. E.)

SARAH. Bring the woman in here, Henson.

(Exit HENSON. He reappears, shows in DELPHINE, and again exits. DELPHINE appears in L. U. E., pauses, looks about, curiously, with a manner denoting some suspicion. She wears a long black veil over her hat, which she now throws back. SARAH, having withdrawn to R. C., stands watching her. DELPHINE comes down, turns, sees SARAH. Starts.)

DELPHINE. So!—it is you, Madame?

SARAH. Won't you sit down?

DELPHINE (*she does not sit as yet*). But—why am I brought here? I do not understand. I was not told that it was to see you. What house is this—why do I come here'——

SARAH. Well, you see, I thought you must think it kind of funny, the way I left you so suddenly that day—and I haven't been feeling very well lately, so I—I thought it would be real kind of you to come and see me, so I could apologize for carrying off your keys the way I did. You see, I was so excited, after what I'd been through, that I really didn't know what I was doing. I guess you understand——

DELPHINE. Oh, oui—certainment, Madame. But to come here—it is strange. However—I am here.

SARAH. Yes, and do sit down. Might as well be comfortable. I hear you're not staying at that flat any more.

DELPHINE. No. It was so—as you said—gloomy—“lonesome.” And the thought of poor Mees Navarre—— Oh, it is too much! But I must not go away—they detain me—as a witness. Ooo! it is too terreeble—I must tell it all—in court!

SARAH. I don't wonder you dread it. But think of me—and my boy——

DELPHINE. It is too bad—I sympathize—but I must tell all——

SARAH. Yes, you must tell—*all*. Aren't there a few things you haven't told—yet?

DELPHINE. I do not understand. Does Madame intend to insinuate——

SARAH. No. That's a good, plain English word—"insinuate"—and you didn't say it a bit "Frenchy," but—I wa'n't "insinuating." I'm just asking. Couldn't you tell a few more things, if you would?

DELPHINE. Madame! What is it that you mean?

SARAH. Oh, I wish you wouldn't keep calling me "Madame." What I meant was, 't mebbe you could help me a little as to why those two keys were different, when you said they were for the same lock.

DELPHINE. Then I mistake. It does not matter. We have many keys.

SARAH. But those two were enough for me—they proved a pretty good fit to what I was trying to open. One fit the front door to your apartment—the other the back door—to the kitchen—"ette," or whatever they call it.

DELPHINE. But of course, there must be a key to that door also.

SARAH. Of course. Or how could you, after you came up in the elevator, that day, have slipped around first to that *back* door—gone into the kitchen—through the dining-room, into that other room—and then——

DELPHINE (*becoming alarmed, but making a good effort to conceal her growing suspicion and fear*). What do you mean? I came in the front door—directly to the room where Miss Navarre lay dead—shot by your nephew—direct from the hall I entered, after getting off the elevator——

SARAH. So you said. But it happens I didn't quite see it that way. So I found out which elevator boy brought you up. He remembers very well. You say you got off the elevator *just as the shot was fired*. You didn't. He let you off at the fourth floor, went on up to the tenth, and it was

when he *got back* to the fourth floor that the gun was fired. He heard it. You had been off the elevator for five minutes or more —

DELPHINE (*who has sprung up—beginning to lose control of herself*). It is not true. He lies—lies, I say —

SARAH. You had plenty of time to go around to the other door—look in to see who was there—see your chance of having your revenge, with somebody else to be suspected of your deed—fire the shot—go back—come in—and —

DELPHINE (*in a furious rage*). How *dare* you say such things—accuse me of such an infamous act? It is an outrage! So that is why you have had me brought here—to insult me—to accuse me of killing my dear mistress, who was all kindness to me—whom I loved. Ah, it is infamous! You shall pay for this—you will see—you will see!

SARAH. I see that you talk United States much better than you put on a French “accent”—for all you are a very clever actress—*Miss Bateman!*

DELPHINE. What! What do you mean—my name is —

SARAH. Eliza Bateman. Of course it is—your real name. Quite a well-known actress, too—and a pretty good one. French maids are quite a specialty of yours, and so your impersonation came in very handy, when you went and hired out to Miss Navarre—even she didn’t see through your neat disguise and your assumed “accent.” It happens I did, though. I was sort of lookin’ to. That was the difference.

DELPHINE. Lies—lies—I say you lie. It is all lies—an infamous, vile plot. I will not stay here —

(*She is about to leave, but SARAH bars her way—so determinedly that she is compelled to stay, though fuming with rage and illy-disguised fear.*)

SARAH. You see, I haven’t been losing any time—me and that “plain country lawyer” the smart

New York lawyers and great detectives have made so much fun of. We have done a little detective work on our own hooks. And found out a few things—about you, Miss Bateman.

DELPHINE. I know not that name. It is false ——

SARAH. You mean "Delphine" is. About that pistol, too. It was Miss Navarre's. She kept it there—you knew where it was—in that room. It was easy enough for you to get in, the way you did—shoot over Dick Brewster's shoulder—slip out and ——

DELPHINE. Be still—be still, I say—I will not listen—it is false! I did not do it—no!—no!—you lie!—you lie!

SARAH. It is *the truth*.

DELPHINE. You say I killed my mistress—Miss Navarre. No—no—it was not she I —— (*She stops, suddenly, confused, trying to cover her mistake.*) I mean—I could not—she who was so good to me —— How can you say ——

SARAH (*going close to her—looking straight into her face and speaking very deliberately and distinctly*). A woman seldom hits what she aims at. You didn't!

DELPHINE. What do you mean? I ——

SARAH. There was a man in that room also ——

DELPHINE. I know—yes—but to me he was a stranger ——

SARAH. Maybe a woman has a right to kill the man who has wronged her—the man who has promised to marry her and then thrown her over—for another. Maybe she has a right to put on a disguise, so she can follow him and prove just how false he is to her—I don't know. Maybe there's some excuse for a woman doing that. There may be some for you. You didn't mean to kill Miss Navarre—I believe that—but you meant to kill *him*—it was him you shot at—and you *killed* her!

DELPHINE. No, no! You shall not say that! It is not true. I did not know him—I never saw him before ——

(The door-bell rings. SARAH goes to L. U. E.—looks off. After a slight pause, enter RALPH DEERING. He comes part way down C.—stops as he sees DELPHINE—surprised, but not recognizing her.)

DEERING. I beg pardon. I did not know ——

SARAH. Mr. Deering, permit me to introduce—Miss Eliza Bateman!

DEERING (*too much taken aback to conceal his amazement*). Eliza—you! What does this mean?

SARAH. So,—you recognize her?

DEERING. Why, yes, I—I do now—though she is not the same. I never thought ——

SARAH. Of course you didn't. How could you—a blonde turned into a brunette?

(DEERING looks dumbfounded, but recognizes DELPHINE, who is unable longer to conceal her identity. She still tries desperately to brazen it out, however.)

DELPHINE. This gentleman is a stranger to me. You will excuse ——

(She starts to go L. U. E., but DEERING steps in her way, so that she is compelled to remain.)

DEERING. Wait. I begin to understand. A very clever disguise, my girl. It's no wonder I didn't recognize you. So—you were tracking me down—seeking revenge—eh? I see. It was you who fired that shot—at me ——

DELPHINE. It is not true. It's a lie—a lie, I say. Let me pass ——

DEERING. Not so fast. I guess your little game is up, Miss Bateman. It didn't work, did it? And she took my place ——

DELPHINE (*at first seeming about to attempt to brazen it out; then, as DEERING continues looking steadily at her, showing fright, which turns to despair and desperation*). It's no use—I see now. It's true—true,—I can deny it no longer. Yes, it was you—you—who made love to me, led me on, till

I gave all—all!—and then deserted me for another. It drove me mad. I was alone—outcast—all because of you, and I resolved to have revenge. But it was not to kill you. No, no,—not that! But that day, when I saw you with her, heard what you said, I was mad—mad—and in that one moment of desperation I tried to end it all. The pistol was there, where she kept it, and he—the boy—he was there—I fired—at you—almost before I knew what I was doing. I didn't know, I was mad—insane, I say,—but I fired, at you—I thought—but I killed her—the one who had been kind to me, whom I loved—— Oh, it was terrible! Take me away—I don't care now what becomes of me. You are not fit to live, but I didn't mean to be a—what you say I am. No—no ——

(She breaks down, sobbing hysterically. MARKHAM, who has entered L. 2 E., goes to her, taking hold of her, not ungently.)

MARKHAM. Leave her to me. I'll look after her.

(HELEN has entered R. in time to hear part of the foregoing, unnoticed by the others. MARKHAM supports DELPHINE and takes her up L. He pauses as SARAH goes up, speaking to him.)

SARAH. What will they do with her? Do you think ——

MARKHAM. No, not so bad. Manslaughter. "Temporary insanity," perhaps.

SARAH. Oh, I'm glad. Perhaps she had some excuse.

(She turns, looks accusingly, scornfully, at DEERING, who has a defiant attitude, paying no attention to her.)

MARKHAM. And as to that other—your "boy," ma'am, why—this changes things.

SARAH. You think now, that—that he—that Dick ——

MARKHAM. Well, you and Fillmore might come down to headquarters, soon as you can. It'll be all right for the boy, now.

(*He goes out L. U. E., with DELPHINE, who is still sobbing and moaning, though more quietly than before. DEERING follows them, after one look at HELEN, whom he has discovered standing up R. She "freezes" him with a contemptuous glance; he shrugs his shoulders and exits L. U. E. SARAH stands L. C., looking after them, her hands clasped, almost weeping, but with a rapt, joyful expression. After a slight pause she turns, sees HELEN, who is still standing R., pale and motionless, staring straight ahead, as if dazed.*)

SARAH (*going to HELEN, taking hold of her, gently*). Helen, you have heard—you understand.

HELEN. He is the man who—who ——

SARAH. Yes, Helen, the one who was there that night—the man who, for revenge on you, told the police that it was Dick—— Oh, Helen, did you need this to show you what he is?

HELEN. No. But this ends it.

SARAH. It was ended before, dear, only you wouldn't believe it. Aren't you glad—thankful? It means that Dick will be free—that you ——

HELEN. Yes, and you have saved him—saved me. Oh, Aunt Sarah, can you ever forgive us—forgive me?

SARAH. There, there, my dear. There's nothing to forgive—not a thing. (*HELEN is weeping. SARAH, with an arm about her, leads her up R., but pauses as LEONARD enters L. 2 E. He pauses L. SARAH sees him, leaves HELEN and goes to him, holding out both hands, which he takes.*) Oh, Len, isn't it wonderful?

LEONARD. Wonderful? Yes, it is all wonderful—and you are the most wonderful of all. I declare, you're a regular Miss Sherlock Holmes!

(*HELEN, at LEONARD'S entrance, gives him one glance,*

ALIAS MISS SHERLOCK

her face showing deep emotion, indicating that she dare not trust herself to speak to him. She exits R.)

SARAH. Pshaw, I haven't done anything. 'T any rate, if I have, I've had pretty good help. And now I'm going to—to him!—and you're going with me.

LEONARD. Y-yes, but —— (*Looking R., longingly.*)

SARAH (*looking around*). Oh, I see. She's run away. Wait. (*Going R.*) And don't forget what I told you, Len—about ——

LEONARD. Oh, I don't think that will be necessary now, that "cave stuff." I have something better than that. Look—what Aaron gave me —— (*Takes a red apple from his pocket; holds it up.*) I don't think she'll be able to resist that. Do you?

SARAH. N-no—not when you go with it.

(*Exit SARAH R., looking back at him with an encouraging smile. He goes over to L. C., stands there waiting, looking eagerly towards R., the hand in which is the apple behind him. After a slight pause enter SARAH R., leading HELEN, who comes timidly, looking down. SARAH urges her on, to C.*)

LEONARD. Helen! (*She looks up at him, then her glance again falls and she turns as if to go, but SARAH holds her, pushing her gently towards LEONARD. HELEN yields, slowly. LEONARD advances a step, holds out the apple, smiling, with an adoring look at her.*) Look—from the old orchard—our Eden. Will you share it—with me?

(*She falters, looking down, then up again, meeting his gaze with a tender smile—yields—he takes her in his arms, puts apple to her lips; kisses it where her lips were,—then kisses her. SARAH, her face radiant, has gone up R., and exits quietly, just as the curtain falls.*)

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An Entertainment in One Act, by WARD MACAULEY. Eight male and six female characters, with minor parts. Plays one hour. Scene, an easy interior, or may be given without scenery. Costumes, modern. Miss Marks, the teacher, refuses to marry a trustee, who threatens to discharge her. The examination includes recitations and songs, and brings out many funny answers to questions. At the close Robert Coleman, an old lover, claims the teacher. Very easy and very effective.

BACK TO THE COUNTRY STORE. A Rural Entertainment in Three Acts, by WARD MACAULEY. For four male and five female characters, with some supers. Time, two hours. Two scenes, both easy interiors. Can be played effectively without scenery. Costumes, modern. All the principal parts are sure hits. Quigley Higginbotham, known as "Quig," a clerk in a country store, aspires to be a great author or singer and decides to try his fortunes in New York. The last scene is in Quig's home. He returns a failure but is offered a partnership in the country store. He pops the question in the midst of a surprise party given in his honor. Easy to do and very funny.

THE DISTRICT CONVENTION. A Farcical Sketch in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. For eleven males and one female, or twelve males. Any number of other parts or supernumeraries may be added. Plays forty-five minutes. No special scenery is required, and the costumes and properties are all easy. The play shows an uproarious political nominating convention. The climax comes when a woman's rights champion, captures the convention. There is a great chance to burlesque modern politics and to work in local gags. Every part will make a hit.

SI SLOCUM'S COUNTRY STORE. An Entertainment in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. Eleven male and five female characters with supernumeraries. Several parts may be doubled. Plays one hour. Interior scene, or may be played without set scenery. Costumes, modern. The rehearsal for an entertainment in the village church gives plenty of opportunity for specialty work. A very jolly entertainment of the sort adapted to almost any place or occasion.

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YOUNG DOCTOR DEVINE. A Farce in Two Acts, by MRS. E. J. H. GOODFELLOW. One of the most popular plays for girls. For nine female characters. Time in playing, thirty minutes. Scenery, ordinary interior. Modern costumes. Girls in a boarding-school, learning that a young doctor is coming to vaccinate all the pupils, eagerly consult each other as to the manner of fascinating the physician. When the doctor appears upon the scene the pupils discover that the physician is a female practitioner.

SISTER MASONS. A Burlesque in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. For eleven females. Time, thirty minutes. Costumes, fantastic gowns, or dominoes. Scene, interior. A grand expose of Masonry. Some women profess to learn the secrets of a Masonic lodge by hearing their husbands talk in their sleep, and they institute a similar organization.

A COMMANDING POSITION. A Farcical Entertainment, by AMELIA SANFORD. For seven female characters and ten or more other ladies and children. Time, one hour. Costumes, modern. Scenes, easy interiors and one street scene. Marian Young gets tired living with her aunt, Miss Skinflint. She decides to "attain a commanding position." Marian tries hospital nursing, college settlement work and school teaching, but decides to go back to housework.

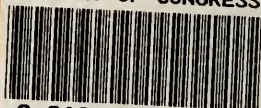
HOW A WOMAN KEEPS A SECRET. A Comedy in One Act, by FRANK DUMONT. For ten female characters. Time, half an hour. Scene, an easy interior. Costumes, modern. Mabel Sweetly has just become engaged to Harold, but it's "the deepest kind of a secret." Before announcing it they must win the approval of Harold's uncle, now in Europe, or lose a possible ten thousand a year. At a tea Mabel meets her dearest friend. Maude sees Mabel has a secret, she coaxes and Mabel tells her. But Maude lets out the secret in a few minutes to another friend and so the secret travels.

THE OXFORD AFFAIR. A Comedy in Three Acts, by JOSEPHINE H. COBB and JENNIE E. PAINE. For eight female characters. Plays one hour and three-quarters. Scenes, interiors at a seaside hotel. Costumes, modern. The action of the play is located at a summer resort. Alice Graham, in order to chaperon herself, poses as a widow, and Miss Oxford first claims her as a sister-in-law, then denounces her. The onerous duties of Miss Oxford, who attempts to serve as chaperon to Miss Howe and Miss Ashton in the face of many obstacles, furnish an evening of rare enjoyment.

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